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POETRY

*Two Poems by Ewart Milne.*

EARLY IN THE MORNING

I walked the road in Ireland,  
Strolled the road in Ireland,  
I walked and strolled in Ireland  
And full of care was I.

There lay my dark young mother  
Beneath the church yews on the hillside,  
There lay my stranger father,  
And their grave would not hold three.

I thought as I went walking  
Of my mother's clear voice singing,  
Of my father playing Beethoven,  
And their thoughts were not on me.

O life, your russet mantle  
Was theirs until they lost it  
Among the Wicklow clover  
Along the road to Roundwood.

O life, I learned your secret  
As my parents could not do,  
For I clasped your russet mantle  
And still it burns me through;

The journey I was going  
Would part me from all dear,  
But they had made an end of parting  
Who lay so quiet there.

Then I thought as I went strolling  
How for all their son I was  
I might have been a Russian  
Or else a man from Mars.

And I smiled to hear the whistling  
Of a jaunty treetops starling—  
Whistling me on my journey—  
And never a care had I.

# THE UNKNOWN MAKER

My fire was cold, it couldn't make me warm,  
My sticks were green, or else too damply a wind was blowing,  
Thick tongued I tried to speak the words of burning charm—  
It hardly smoked ! There seemed no way to get it moving.

I saw a cave, a mossy dwellingplace  
Of those who lived before a nation's face was showing,  
And within, the hearthstone of a tinker's rootless grace  
Where in a moment I had lit my fire and it was glowing.

Firedark in its glow I stood ; from heel to throat  
A slow warmth spread and soon my tongue was loosening ;  
I laughed and sang ; the moon climbed high and stars winked out,  
And far and near and all around the Hidden Land was listening .

And through the night all through the night I sang,  
and at the dawn  
The people of the Hidden Land had made my song their own.

*Three Poems by Patrick MacDonogh.*

### A MERMAID JOY

Ah, loveliness ! Ah, loveliness !  
 That came and went,  
 That surely came, inevitably went,  
 How should we gather what the wild winds sow ?  
 How should we reap content  
 Who set our hearts on heights of happiness,  
 High sun, high storm, high rock, bewilderment  
 Of windy wing and cloud ? And all we spent  
 Blown to the point of no return, while safe below  
 The silken valleys took their cent per cent.

How to evaluate ? All cost control,  
 Tables of productivity, all progress charts  
 Prove our insolvency. Even for the soul  
 We planned no pure curriculum of arts ;  
 Ran with the culture hounds by fits and starts ;  
 Hid with the hunted in its earthy hole,  
 Knowing we lived when the loud hunt was dead,  
 Knowing all art and all the ache for truth,  
 All that brought back each wearied age to youth  
 Began and ended in our simple bed.

Ah, loveliness ! Ah, loveliness !  
 That came and went,  
 That rarely came, inevitably went,  
 Sea-driven by the angers in our flesh  
 How should we find content ?  
 Yet from a foreign sea, wake of distress,  
 Sprang the first mermaid joy that time had lent  
 To mock the solemn earth, and hours misspent  
 In twisted quarrels wove an endless mesh  
 Netting us three in sweet bright argument.

## AFTERPEACE

This wind that howls about our roof to-night  
 And tears live branches screaming from great trees,  
 To-morrow may have scarcely strength to ruffle  
 The rabbit's back to silver in the sun.

## THE DREAM

How splendidly this dream  
 Grows big behind the eyes.  
 Its fibres throng the brain  
 Whose laboured soil is fed  
 With humour and delight ;  
 And all the night becomes  
 One slowly opening flower,  
 One vast unfolding white  
 Lily whose climbing light  
 Heralds the holy dawn.

## MIDNIGHT ON THE FARM

*By R. S. Thomas.*

Morgan, stop your silly talk  
 Of ghosts and ghouls ; don't be a fool, man ;  
 You'll have me quaking in a minute,  
 Going on like that. There's nothing in it,  
 I know, but still the nights are lonely  
 In a hill farm, and on such diet  
 Of old tales men's shadows grow  
 Unruly in the fickle light  
 Of a wood fire, so shut up, or—  
 Shut up, I said. I can't stand  
 A word more.  
 God ! What was that ?

Morgan, where are you ? Speak, Morgan, speak.  
 Come on, now, Morgan ; none of your tricks,  
 Trying to scare me. I know you're there.  
 The door's still shut, no wind has come  
 Colder than fear to take your place  
 At the red hearth ; the naked moon  
 Still craves admission. I can see  
 You crouched there, Morgan . . . Morgan *back* . . .  
 O God, too long ! Should he come now,  
 Smirking out of that dark corner  
 To sip slyly the warm pool  
 Of light fawning about my feet,  
 My mind would break as the night breaks  
 In a storm of starry and shrill laughter.

### WEST KERRY

*By M. J. Wigham.*

Don't leave this gull curve coast  
 The gannet dive, the weight of forgetful water,  
 Without the story of sodden-footed years,  
 A century of mist's soundless clatter  
 Flagellating tongues of wind :  
 The winter ripple chattering like starlings,  
 The sun boom of wood on hollow boat,  
 Or summer violence of blustering warm roller  
 Cascading wallowing, whale in trough  
 Rock under breaker.

Father to son and sailor-saint to fisher,  
 Farmer-fisher leaving stool and stack  
 And the plunging jagged sheep in thorn and heather,  
 For the gossamer grey and milk white wakes  
 Of boats that trace and criss-cross Blasket sound :  
 Their tracks shut in by salty drift in winter,  
 White lippling grey in cataract and cadence  
 Or flattery the summer's lax sea bosom ;  
 Top heavy islands hidden in the sunrise  
 Among the floating companies of birds.

For centuries the mackerel flicker ways  
 Of men and boats extended on the water,  
 Cobbled and stitched landfall to Atlantic,  
 Flouted the courted and half won oceans  
 Feckless splendour.

Then ways receded to cliff and contour ;  
 Above the shingle and coarse sea surf  
 Black boats lie idle beside the pathways,  
 Where salt winds lifting from creek and quay  
 Are mellowed by thyme and gorse.

You may watch from here where the tassled fringe  
 Of the poster blue Atlantic batters  
 The troubled turbulent rocks ;  
 Where the road leads down to the beach  
 Through clean singing air that shows  
 Land's ending and wall of sea for visitor's brochure ;  
 Where only the museum man and naturalist  
 Searching for traces in path and drifted weed  
 Can repeat the old, eclipsed and who cares story,  
 Careering boat on gossamer grey sea.

## CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH OF Æ

*By Monk Gibbon*

THOUGH Æ has been dead only twenty years and though there are still many people living who knew him intimately, there has already grown up quite a large body of literature about him based partly upon incomplete and inaccurate information. There are a number of reasons for this. He himself was always extremely reticent and vague about his private affairs. One of his earliest and closest friends, Mrs. Carrie Coates, once wrote to me, "he never spoke of outside matters, indeed he might have had neither father, mother nor brother." I think it was Professor Osborn Bergin who told me how, walking in Dublin

with him one day, Æ happened to exchange salutations with a man whom they were passing, and remarked quietly a moment later, "Do you know who that was? That was my brother," adding after a slight pause, "He is too fat." This is practically the only glimpse that I have been able to get of this relative, confirmed by Seamus O'Sullivan, who tells me that the brother had a beard, and by John Eglinton, who adds that the brother predeceased Æ by several years. But it is quite safe to say that not one in a thousand of Æ's many friends knew that he had a brother, and, but for this chance, Bergin, one of the closest of them, would not have known either. Volute in the extreme with regard to anything in the nature of an idea, always willing to expound a particular aspect of his mental or spiritual development, Æ despised autobiographical detail, and took no trouble either to establish it or to correct it. This was part of his deep conviction that whether for nations or individuals what matters is not what happens externally, but what happens to the soul. But this reticence has already led to a number of mis-statements. I can best give an example by quoting a passage from a treatise by an American graduate written while Æ was still alive.

"At seventeen, we find him keeping books at Pim's, a drapery house in Dublin. At this time too, he became interested in the Scriptures of the world, all of which he held in equal reverence and affection. For the next twelve years he read scarcely anything but the Sacred Books, Brahminical, Buddhist, Egyptian and Chinese philosophies. He met an Indian missionary and in a few months was writing the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* in English in both verse and prose—the metrical version the better of the two. His thought seemed to flow as easily into rhyme and metre as they had into line and colour. His conscience again bothered him and it was not long before he was asking his disciples—he had become the leader of the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society—whether he should contribute essays or poems to their magazine, *The Irish Theosophist*, which first appeared in the fall of 1892 and continued until 1897. They wisely decided for the metrical form, and to this we owe his inspired volumes, *Homeward, Songs by the Way*, 1894, and *The Earth Breath*, 1897."

There is hardly a statement in the above which is not wholly or partly inaccurate. The author has taken the trouble to quote authorities, but the authorities themselves are unsound. For instance  $\text{Æ}$ 's first biographer, Darrel Figgis, in Maunsell's series "Great Irishmen of Today", is given as the source for the statement that  $\text{Æ}$  was at work at Pim's at the age of seventeen. But Darrel Figgis was wrong.  $\text{Æ}$  did not join the staff of Pim's until six years later in 1890. Messrs. Pim have consulted their books and given me the exact date, August 1st, 1890. His whereabouts during the six years previous to this is still largely a mystery. What follows concerning the Sacred Books of the East is vague and over-stated, and it is a little difficult to know what is meant by "writing the Upanishads" in English.  $\text{Æ}$  had no knowledge of Sanskrit.\*  $\text{Æ}$  was never "leader" of the Dublin Lodge, though he might with truth be called its leading spirit. The term would be more applicable to F. J. Dick, in whose house the lodge had its headquarters. And Moore's picturesque legend—based possibly on some vague utterance of  $\text{Æ}$  himself—that he was given the choice between prose and poetry and chose poetry, proves on consultation of the files of the journal to be completely without foundation, for he contributed liberally in both sorts to almost every issue, and his contributions in prose outnumber those in verse. These may all seem points of minor importance, but one of them at least is a bad chronological blunder, and concerns six of the most important and formative years in a writer's life. It would be a fundamental heresy to  $\text{Æ}$ 's own views to imply that externals mattered one hundredth part as much as the poet's inner mental life. Quite early he emancipated himself from the influence of circumstance more completely than most men succeed in doing in a lifetime. But that it was wholly without influence is most unlikely. In old age and in a moment of rare depression he himself once hinted to me that he had been bound always to the tyranny of economic necessity. And even if no other externals mattered his friendships mattered enormously,

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\*Moore here is probably the culprit—"A few months later the Upanishads and the Vedas were born again in verse and in prose—the metrical version better than the prose." (Salve, P. 22). All Moore meant, I imagine, by this was that many of  $\text{Æ}$ 's poems paraphrased the thought of the Upanishads. So legend is created. In Moore's defence it must be said that he was writing a literary work and not an academic treatise. There is no 'prose version' for  $\text{Æ}$ 's essays in *The Irish Theosophist* could not possibly be given that title.

and it is worth having accurate information upon these ; those which influenced him in early manhood influenced him profoundly. Like all ardent spirits he was capable of hero-worship, and, though he presently became the object of it himself, nevertheless to the end of his life he remained also the votary, being remarkably faithful to his early attachments. As a young man he passed through at least one phase when his respect for the psychic powers of a friend gave the latter an influence over him which, according to John Eglinton, "appeared hypnotic".

But even if one should concede—which I am far from doing—the irrelevancy of the actual and factual in relation to someone whose adventures were primarily mental and spiritual, there exists the strongest possible argument for an intensive study of Æ's youth in order to discover there, if they are discoverable, the formative mental influences which contributed to his growth. "There is no more subtle pleasure," he himself wrote in old age, "than digging below the foundations of an intellectual." But to dig below the foundations of an intellectual is a relatively simple matter compared to digging below the foundations of a mystic and visionary who is also a poet, a task possibly beyond the power of anyone, even of the mystic himself. Actually few have gone further in this direction than Æ did. In *Song and its Fountains*, by his own confession, he has "tried to track song back to its secret fountains." In *The Candle of Vision* he subjects his own mystic and visionary experience to an analysis which is certainly acute if it is not exhaustive.

The student of Æ's youth and early manhood is therefore not without help from Æ himself. But his task remains an extremely difficult one. A few years ago in conversation with me in his study the poet Seumas O'Sullivan remarked apropos some Æ association items which he had been showing to me, "I have a photograph that I believe is of Æ's parents." Going to a drawer he took from it a slightly faded photograph taken by 'Hunter and Co., Armagh and Monaghan,' evidently of a husband and wife ; the woman standing, the man seated beside her in a low chair, with knees crossed, fingers interlaced, and one elbow resting on the tasselled arm of the chair. From the woman's clothes, the black skirt, the tightly buttoned black jacket with full sleeves and braided satin epaulets, the small white muslin cap and huge cameo brooch, the photograph appeared to have

been taken about 1880. It is typical of its period, the husband seated, earnest and assured, the wife standing beside him with an almost peasant submissiveness, her hands joined in front of her. The man's hair is white, and he has a short, thick, carefully trimmed white moustache and beard, which just reveals the firm mouth and rather full underlip. He is looking out through gold-rimmed spectacles with an earnestness which suggests Emerson and the New England idealists, and there is something distinctly balanced, calm and even noble about the head.

Great men are said generally to take after their mothers, but it must have been from his father that  $\text{\ae}$  got his prophetic impulse, for his mother's face is commonplace by comparison. Those slightly-knit brows, that controlled mouth, suggest pre-occupation with all the tiresome details of life ; though her hands with their long fingers might be the hands of an artist. But the man is all fervour and seriousness; the sort of face, stern and reflective, without being actually forbidding, which has accounted for a good deal in America—both for Walt Whitman and for the Mormon Church.

Seumas O'Sullivan begged me to draw no conclusions from the photograph until it had first been definitely identified. I suggested that I should take it to Henry Goodwillie, who had been at school with  $\text{\ae}$ , and whom I had heard mentioning  $\text{\ae}$ 's parents. He was the one man in Dublin who might know.

The photograph was taken to Goodwillie, who looked at it carefully for a moment and then said, "Yes, that is Russell's father." I think I am justified in drawing the further inference that the figure beside him is his wife. Since it is taken in Armagh but, from the white hair and beard, probably after the time when the family had moved to Dublin, there is just a possibility that it might be a sister of Thomas Elias Russell, that aunt with whom  $\text{\ae}$  used to stay in Armagh. But this is very improbable, for the whole pose has a definitely conjugal touch.

I was wise to go when I did, for a year or two later Goodwillie was dead. It was he I believe who told me that Thomas Elias Russell did not approve of his son's excursions into Theosophy and, learning that George had lent his late schoolfellow *ISIS UNVEILED*, took him aside one day and loaned him a copy of *LUX MUNDI* as a counterblast. Or I may be wrong and my informant may have been the Rev. Chester Browne, Russell's

other boon companion at Dr. Benson's school. But I certainly had the story from one or other of them. There is an allusion in one of Æ's early letters to LUX MUNDI which shows that he did not share his father's high opinion of that work.

Apart from this photograph and apart from the brief references made to them in John Eglinton's A MEMOIR OF Æ, I have been able to find out practically nothing about Æ's parents. Goodwillie liked them and said that they always gave him a friendly reception when he went to their house. John Eglinton in his memoir quotes a letter from Frazer Hill, the headmaster of Lurgan Model School in which he says, "Thomas Elias was book-keeper in an old Quaker firm of cambric manufacturers, and had married Mary Anne Armstrong, employed in a general store where he had previously been book-keeper; she had been bred in the country near Lurgan. He is remembered by some of the old people as a man of striking appearance, gentle and cultured, and of deep religious convictions, attending the Parish Church in the mornings and the Primitive Methodist Church in the afternoons, and was much respected in the neighbourhood."

Robert Farren has made the interesting suggestion that Æ inherited his tendency to eclecticism from his father. I imagine that he inherited a good deal more from that parent than he himself realised. For a number of years, well on into early manhood, he lived at home, and the relationship seems to have survived the acute strain which differences of thought on religious subjects possibly placed on it. I even find from the attendance book of the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society that Thomas Elias attended one or two of their meetings in the evening—significantly on occasions when the debate was open and criticisms were invited. The late Mr. Leopold Pim, head of the firm of drapers—a Quaker one—which Æ entered as an accountant, told me that in those days it was the custom for the staffs of the large stores to be provided with board and lodging on the premises, if they so wished; but he did not think that Russell availed himself of that privilege. He probably continued to live with his parents in Grosvenor Square. That certainly is the address given when he was first enrolled on their books. A couple of years later he is writing to Carrie Rea (later Mrs. Coates) from 3, Upper Ely Place, where he and a number of other young theosophists resided with Mr. and Mrs. Dick. In June, 1892, his parents

moved from Rathmines to Sandycove, near Kingstown, where he seems to have spent his holidays, and presently rejoined them to live with them when the household in Ely-Place came to an end.

I do not think, therefore, that at any time there can have been a breach between father and son, though probably there were differences of opinion on the subject which touched each of them most nearly. It is curious that though Æ was never tired of emphasising that it is the first contacts of the soul in early childhood that largely decide its subsequent course (in *SONG AND ITS FOUNTAINS* or in a poem like *GERMINAL*, for example), he never seems to have suspected that his own strongly-religious upbringing had influenced the subsequent trend of his mind. All the same, John Eglinton can write "Russell's prose style, often employing Biblical quotation, and indeed his whole personality, bore traces of his pious unbringing". Æ's suggestion that as a boy he was light-hearted and unspiritual "... aged about sixteen or seventeen years . . . I, the slackest and least ideal of boys" has probably a touch of exaggeration about it, but its truth, at seventeen, would not rule out the possibility of a strong, still latent, if unconscious, religious influence from his early formative years. Inge points out that the evangelical tradition can contain a vein of pure and genuine mysticism; and this may have influenced Æ in childhood without his knowing it. All the same there are several indications which suggest that Æ acquired in youth a dislike of the God of the Hebrews from which he never recovered, and indeed a large part of his life was spent trying to discover a better deity, or deities, to put in his place.

In one of his letters to Carrie Rea he begs her not to pass on anything that he has said to his aunt in Armagh, as if she does he will inevitably find himself made the subject of a whole series of prayer meetings. He must have been about twenty at the time, and this and other references in the same series of letters imply that his break with orthodox opinion was a cause of distress to his family and even of occasional anguish to himself. He had been a rebel, however, from the beginning. This transpires from the very significant little story told by George Moore of the child's decision on the road near Armagh to defy a deity who could punish him for doing something which he had never promised not to do. The story indicates that the boy placed a very high

value on the integrity of a promise, either innately or from what he had been taught ; and an almost correspondingly low estimation of Jehovah. It is a little difficult for us in these days to realise the light in which the faithful, either intentionally or unintentionally presented the Deity to their children in the last century. God emphatically was to be feared as well as loved. I remember my surprise when my own father, who had been brought up in the kindest of homes by the most tender-hearted of parents, told me one day that his mother when she put him to bed whispered in his ear that if he did not put his head on the pillow and go straight to sleep he was in more than a little danger of going presently to hell. It sounds incredible, but my father who adored his mother, was most truthful and possessed a good memory. Hell appears to have been a definite weapon in the parental armoury of those days.

Æ friend Katherine Tynan chose her own explanation of his rejection of the Jewish and Christian God. She wrote of him during his lifetime that he was “ without religion, yet profoundly religious : the peace of God which passeth understanding lies about him now as it did then. He was brought up in the narrowest tenets of Irish Evangelicalism. I remember when his family were sorely distressed by his association with Willie Yeats. Leaving behind him the narrow and ugly creed to which he was born, he has adopted no other form of Christian religion ; he finds gods in the earth and the air—rather I would say he finds God ; and his life unconsciously has cast incense on the altars of the Unknown God.”

That the creed was narrow and ugly can be only surmise. Eglinton quotes St. John Irvine, “ the little town of Lurgan in which he was born is notorious in Ireland for the harshness of its religious discussions. A base bigotry flourishes there. It is in the nature of things that from a place of great bitterness should come a man of reconciliation.” But Goodwillie has said to me that Æ’s parents though North of Ireland Protestants were very far from being dour and unsympathetic. As a devout Catholic, Katherine Tynan may have felt that her Church could have retained him in its bosom, but John Eglinton rightly notes that in his insistence upon the inner light as the one true source of guidance Æ was typically “ Protestant.” He was not made to be the obedient adherent of any church or sect. He outgrew to

a large extent the one movement with which he did identify himself, and C. P. Curran points out to me the significant fact that there are no explicit references to Theosophy by name in any of his books.

There are other hints, besides Katherine Tynan's, that Yeats was not regarded in the Russell family as *persona grata* and that Æ's relatives viewed with distress his lapse from orthodoxy.

It is quite likely that his spirit rebelled fiercely even in childhood against a particular type of piety. But there is no need to suggest a Freudian complex in which Æ's father and God the Father became inextricably mixed and in which he grew to hate them both equally. I think it a good deal more likely that genuine love existed between father and son as well as occasional anguish on both sides. Though we know so little, there is enough to suggest that the father took pride in his son's various talents and was anxious to cultivate them. The boy was entered at the Art School at the early age of thirteen. Soon after he was sent to the best private school in Dublin. I do not think that Æ mentions either of his parents in all his published work, but when he was dying in Bournemouth he told John Eglinton that his father had given him as a boy a copy of Tennyson's poems. "A few weeks before his death, while lying ill at Bournemouth, he asked me to bring him a copy of Tennyson, and he then told me that when he was a boy his father had given him Tennyson's POEMS, and that this was the first revelation to him of the art of poetry." John Eglinton adds the slightly petulant comment, "Why could he not have told us a thing like this in SONG AND ITS FOUNTAINS? It would have been more humanly interesting than the vague and inconsecutive evocations of memory in that strange record."

Everything of the little we know of him is in the father's favour, but at the same time most of the evidence—especially Æ's own silence where his parents are concerned—points to a revulsion on his part against the early sanctities in which he had been brought up and a wish to forget them.

(*To be continued.*)

# THE ULSTER LITERARY THEATRE

*By Rutherford Mayne*

THE Programme of the Golden Jubilee Performance on the 27th of December last year brought a nostalgic memory of what happened in Belfast in that same month fifty years ago.

The 8th of December, 1904, dates the birthday of the Ulster Literary Theatre. The programme of the performances announced the first production of two plays, *Brian of Banba*, by Bulmer Hobson, and *The Reformers*, by Lewis Purcell. The names of the players were not given. [There was a rule that names of players should not be given on programmes. It was not abolished until some years afterwards.]

The programme set out however a note on the aims of the Society—"To produce literary and artistic plays and to encourage in Ulster a school of writers and actors of such plays. All who are interested in the development of a native art are invited to become members or subscribers."

This sounds like a faint echo of the appeal made some years before in Dublin by the leaders of the new movement in Irish Drama that had already given birth to *Kathleen ni Houlihan* and *The Riders to the Sea*.

But this Belfast programme note read more like an appeal to found a provincial school of drama confined to Ulster. However, a magazine named *Uladh* on sale that evening provided further information supplemented by a talk with Lewis Purcell.

There had been previous productions in Belfast by the same company or some of them two years before, of *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, AE's *Deirdre* and *The Racing Lug* by Seumas Cousins. These plays of the Irish National Literary Theatre Society had been produced by W. G. Fay's Irish National Dramatic Company in 1902.

Bulmer Hobson and Lewis Purcell went up to see Fay's productions. The Fays had been very kind to them. Dudley

Digges and Maire Quinn of that company promised to come to Belfast and assist the two young men to give performances of *Kathleen ni Houlihan* and another play, *The Racing Lug*. These were duly given in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast, in 1902, and a year later the company unaided reproduced *Kathleen ni Houlihan* and Æ's *Deirdre*.

*Uladh* refers to these performances and candidly admitted they were bad, and that everybody except the Dublin players had everything to learn. Some explanation seems necessary for the adoption of a new title, and of a provincial approach to the creation of a national drama.

Apparently objection had been taken over some announcement of these earlier productions as being given by "the Ulster branch" of some one or other of the literary or dramatic societies and companies in Dublin. The rent of the halls, hire of scenery, advertisements, royalties, etc., had resulted in a deficit.

Gerald MacNamara many years afterwards humorously remarked, "There was a deficit. It was willingly—in fact joyfully paid by the members. At this, the darkest hour, a brain wave settled on the President who proposed 'that the Theatre should be "floated."'" The floating "consisted of sending out prospectuses inviting the public to send in subscriptions (limited to a guinea) for which they could gain admission to the performances. There was a response—one gentleman sent in five shillings which was returned a few years afterwards when the Theatre had gained a sound financial footing."

After this failure, the Theatre Committee, being Ulstermen born and bred, determined to cut down expenses by writing their own plays and so save the authors' fees. Two plays, *Brian of Banba* and *The Reformers*, both written by members of the Theatre, were produced. I might add that no royalties were paid to their authors by the Ulster Literary Theatre if they were members until after 1916, and then only if there was no loss incurred.

In 1905 the Theatre moved to the Clarence Place Hall in May Street, where they produced *The Enthusiast* by Lewis Purcell and *The Little Cowherd of Slainge* by Joseph Campbell.

Forrest Reid in his survey of eighteen years work of The Ulster Players (*Times Irish Supplement*, 5th December, 1922), wrote describing a visit to a rehearsal of *The Enthusiast* "My first acquaintance with the Ulster Literary Theatre as it was

then called, was made under the wing of Mr. W. B. Reynolds, the accomplished composer and musical critic at that time, the beginning of 1905, edited *Uladh*, a short-lived quarterly . . . and if the pages are not wholly pathetic to-day it is principally because they reflect the bravery of revolt—revolt against the tyranny of commercial materialism which weighed upon our native city and in the shadow of which we have been all brought up. Reynolds who was an idealist, revolted more than anybody. He saw too with the eye of faith and on the strength of a couple of slender local comedies was already discussing architectural plans for the new theatre and devising schemes for a building fund. It was to no such Temple of the Muses however that he brought me this damp dark night of January or February, 1905, but a house in May Street, and there in a brightly lit and extremely chilly back-room upstairs I watched a rehearsal of *The Enthusiast*.

This was eighteen years ago, yet it is all perfectly clear to me as I write. I remember Padraic Colum chanting in my ears Yeat's new poem, *The Happy Townland*, and a parody of another Yeat's poem, *I hear the bad old, old men say*. Fred Morrow was stage managing, and W. R. Gordon was there, and Bulmer Hobson and John Campbell, the black and white artist, who played the part of Sam McKinstry and Jack Morrow . . . as the enthusiast . . . Rutherford Mayne, who had the part of Rob, the servant man, was not present, but James Good came in later, and John McBurney who, with Parkhill, Reynolds and Good, did perhaps more for the cause of art than anybody else. Of the acting, I remember principally Willy Gordon's very fine interpretation of William John McKinstry, the old father, but the whole thing was a revelation to me it was so fresh, natural and new—and I felt that Reynolds after all had not exaggerated its importance. I still believe *The Enthusiast* to be a genuine work of art—slight—imperfect—but vital—in one way more vital than anything the Ulster Theatre has done since, for we must remember that from it sprang the more significant of the only two forms of drama it has as yet mastered—folk comedy and fantastic farce."

I fully agree with Forrest Reid. It was *The Enthusiast* that opened the road to success for the Ulster Theatre with the folk plays afterwards. The delight of playing "Rob" in *The Enthusiast* with those fine actors, Willy Gordon, John Campbell and Jack Morrow, with Margaret O'Gorman (Bridget O'Farrell), will ever

remain in my memory. Whatever success was achieved by writing *The Turn of the Road* was due to Lewis Purcell's help and advice.

Joseph Campbell's poetic play, *The Little Cowherd of Slainge*, was based on a legend of the Mourne Mountains about a magical cowherd who lures to her death the daughter of one of the chieftains of Mourne. There was a certain promise in it of the later beauty of his work in the *Mountainy Singer*.

In 1906, Purcell, who was forever on the move to new fields of drama, wrote *The Pagan*, and I finished my first play, *The Turn of the Road*. The first production of these two plays was given in the College Hall at the Queen's University on the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Hamilton. Laurence Lynd, brother of Robert Lynd, was instrumental in getting these productions there. He was then I think, President of the Queen's College Gaelic Society. Purcell's *Pagan* was, in my opinion, one of the finest contributions made to the Ulster Theatre. Forrest Reid described him as the "artistic conscience" of that theatre, and I fully agree.

He dates his play to "the sixth century," and it gives a very clear objective view to what the coming of Christianity meant to warlike tribes in Ulster and their chieftains, and clansmen and serfs. The very beautiful designs of costumes for Nuala, daughter of Cromall Ruadh, and Gorman McRory, chieftain of the tribes of the McNial and the Crinthni, designed by John Campbell, and as worn by the artist and his sister Josephine and Sam Bulloch, attracted the delighted attention of artists in both Belfast and Dublin.

I wonder often what happened then. It was revived quite recently by Radio Eireann, and I thought the play came over as fresh as when I first heard it. I recollect W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory coming in after its production at the Abbey in the following year (1907), and expressing their admiration of John Campbell's costumes.

In December, 1907, at Christmas time, the Theatre made the most daring and audacious attempt in their history. To anyone who knows the city well, it might easily have had the same result as throwing a lit match into a barrel of gun-powder.

*Suzanne and the Sovereigns* was produced at the Exhibition Hall. It was completely unlike any other play hitherto staged by the Society.

The names of its principal characters, and some idea of their importance, are set out on the ballad sheets that served as programmes :—

WILLIAM THREE. A hero king  
Brave and kind and good-looking.

JAMES THE SECOND. For him see  
Note above on William Three.

SWEET SUZANNE. A maiden fair  
Pearly teeth and golden hair.

LUNDY. Traitor, villain, spy  
Bold and bad and very sly.

with more rhymed couplets of other leading figures of the Battle of the Boyne period, and a deputation from Belfast arriving in Amsterdam to the strains of Lillibulero. The result was a complete triumph.

There was a repetition given in January the following year, 1909. It is interesting to find an acknowledgment to Whitford Kane for his loan of costumes for this revival of the play. He was instrumental in bringing Ulster plays and players across the Irish Sea to England and later to America. I am proud to say that a young barrister who later became one of the best known Judges of the Northern High Court replaced me in my former part on this occasion.

The Ulster Theatre gave its first performance in Dublin at the Abbey Theatre in 1907, with *The Pagan*, and *The Turn of the Road* on the Saturday of Holy Week that year. At that period I think Miss Horniman owned the Little Theatre and gave it to the Irish National Theatre Society for their productions. When they were not occupying the theatre, it was let by Cramer Woods to other societies or persons whose temporary occupation would not injure the prestige of the Society.

Lewis Purcell went as advance agent for the Ulster Literary Theatre to book a date at the Abbey Theatre if possible. The two plays produced in Belfast had been extremely well received. Padraic Colum and Maurice Joy had been up to Belfast previously and seen performances there of which they wrote appreciatively. George Roberts of Maunsel and Company, the famous Dublin

publishers, was considering publication of the plays after the Belfast productions, but thought it desirable that they should be presented to a Dublin audience in the first instance.

Purcell came back and told rather an amusing story of how he found that by some oversight The Irish National Theatre Society had not reserved Easter Week—which is one of the best weeks of the theatrical year—and he had promptly booked that week for the Ulster Theatre and then went to see W. B. Yeats. The result being that Purcell managed to get the Abbey Theatre for the Saturday night of Holy Week.

There was a small but very representative audience present : Yeats and Lady Gregory, Seumas O'Sullivan, George Russell, the Fays, and most of the famous Abbey Theatre Company. *The Playboy of the Western World* had been produced only a few weeks before and the commotion had hardly died down. The welcome we received that night was such that it was decided to give the Ulster Theatre's new plays, *The Leaders of the People* and *The Drone*, their first production in Dublin the following year.

1908 was a memorable year in the history of the Ulster Theatre. The production of the new plays which were given at the Abbey Theatre received a remarkable reception from both the public and the press.

*The Leaders of the People* was a modern play dealing with the clash of party politics with political idealism, and though finely written failed to achieve popular success. *The Drone* followed a more familiar furrow and achieved immediate success, and continued for many years afterwards in the repertoire of the Ulster Theatre. Both plays were repeated in Belfast later that year. Meantime, Whitford Kane had induced me to join the late William Mollison's Shakespearian Company, and Mollison gave a first production of my play *The Troth*, in London. This company on its then tour included *The Troth* in its repertoire and produced it in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. It was a peasant tragedy in which Kane gave a fine rendering of his part in it and led to his subsequent productions of Ulster Theatre plays in England and later in America. (Ref. : ARE WE ALL MET. By Whitford Kane. Elkin Matthews. 1931).

In the January of 1909, the Ulster Theatre gave its last production in the small halls of Belfast. It staged a revival of *Suzanne* and *The Sovereigns* again at the Exhibition Hall for which

Whitford Kane lent his costumes. Fred Warden, the well-known managing director, offered the company a date at the Opera, and that theatre became its home for almost thirty years afterwards.

In 1909, I obtained employment with the Land Commission and left to spend over 40 years in its varied history, most of that time west of the Shannon, and never again resided in Belfast, though I managed to keep in touch when on leave at odd intervals. The outstanding work that marks the further history of the Ulster Theatre was accomplished by Gerald MacNamara aided by Lynn Doyle.

MacNamara's plays mark a brilliant epoch in that period and established the Ulster Literary Theatre as a company that excelled in his fantastic burlesques. *The Mist that does be on the Bog*, the famous *Thompson in Tir na nOg*, *The Throwbacks*, *No Surrender*, *Thompson in Terra Firma*, *Fee Faw Fum?* and other amusing skits.

His high water mark was reached in *Thompson in Tir na nOg*, first produced at the Opera House in Belfast, 1912. The adventures of the little Orangeman when accidentally hurled into "the Land of Everlasting Youth" to meet the heroes and heroines of Gaelic mythology, never fail to render any Irish audience almost helpless with laughter North or South of the Boyne.

Lynn Doyle contributed in 1913 *Love and Land*, and later *The Lilac Ribbon*, and *Turncoats*. They are all delightful examples of this writer's keen sense of humour and characterisation. They rank amongst the Theatre's most successful productions.

There were in addition other writers such as C. K. Ayre in this period who achieved success with their work.

I regret so little has been written here about this later period which is important to note in any survey of the Ulster Theatre.

By the time the Ulster Theatre had reached its 21st birthday in 1925 it had probably reached the maximum of its attempt to achieve the aims of its founders.

Jas. Winder Good remarked in *Uladh* 50 years ago, "The Ulster Theatre may never produce an epoch-making play or evolve a distinctive school of acting, but if it aids, even a little, in breaking down the barrier that has so long divided the North from the South, its work will not have been done in vain."

# SEAN O'FAOLAIN

*A Study*

*By Neville Braybrooke*

SOMEWHERE, lost in childhood, lie the uncharted springs that keep alive the secret beasts of cave and conduit, fable and fiction. Men pine for a return, and their activities become mere distractions on the way. Psychologists know of this when they speak of the death-wish in the womb ; others know of it when they refer to Eden. The experience is general because in life's cycle the flowers that make the bridal bouquet come from the same garden as those that make the funeral wreath. The knowledge is both common to aristocrat and peasant, and in communities where the soil is a constant bond this tie is emphasized ; in Ireland they light a candle for the newly dead—a symbol of their first *birthday* in the next world. Sean O'Faolain's work is lit by these candles ; like Synge or Yeats, his best work has been done at home—work that is strangely free of the artificial glare of the big city. London, Paris and Zürich may have tempted him, but unlike Shaw or Joyce he has never become an exile. At the most, exile for him has taken on the shape of partial retreats into the past as both a novelist and biographer.

In his first book, *A Nest of Simple Folk* (1933), O'Faolain adapts the saga form : beginning in the middle 'fifties of the last century, the novel ends with the 1916 Easter Rising. In its pages generations pass and die ; yet they remain essentially people about whom you hear on your mother's knee. *A Nest of Simple Folk* is not contemporary in the sense that *Ulysses* (1922) is. In fact, much of the book is quite literally hearsay—what Sean may have been told by his father who served with the Royal Irish Constabulary. Again, O'Faolain's second novel, *Bird Alone* (1936), is another backward glance to the 'seventies when Corney, its narrator, was born. The conflicts that it presents dovetail with those of the first book—indeed, with the whole O'Faolain canon.

One critic, Mr. Donat O'Donnell, has defined these conflicts as 'Parnellism', by which he means the struggle for national, spiritual and sexual emancipation. Inevitably those characters that rebel against Church, State and sexual prohibition become O'Faolain heroes. At first this may sound a provincial state of mind for an author, but remember that in this case the author, of his own choosing, is working in a provincial country where several of his books have been banned and where the monthly review that he founded, *The Bell*, is eyed suspiciously by the hierarchy.

For example, in the nest of simple folk among which Corney lives, he has to prove his innocence in a police court by proving alternatively that he was in the woods with a girl at midnight. Elsie Sherlock's father rampages against Corney, forbidding his daughter to speak to him and fiercely castigating her for having 'disgraced her brother at Maynooth'. Corney finds himself hemmed in, unable to emancipate himself; convention forces the bowing of his will to that of the girl's father—an act of submission that he can only accept by repeating to himself the terrible way in which she has 'let her family crucify her'. The operative word is 'crucify', just as 'simple folk' are the operative words in the title. For however much these characters may pull against the bit, they cannot throw off the reins of their religion. At its kindest 'Irish religion' is a leading rein. To a liberal, therefore, the temptation in an unquestioningly Catholic country is to look back to Eden; but this cannot be a whole-time adult occupation for the novelist. O'Faolain's simple folk when they become heroes look back or link themselves to men or movements of the past—with Land Leaguers or Fenians, with O'Connell, Parnell or Collins. These are semi-substitutes for Guardian Angels.

O'Faolain once took a big film tycoon to *The Gresham Hotel* in Dublin. It was the man's first visit to Ireland and, by way of keeping up the conversation he asked if *The Gresham* corresponded to either *Claridges* in London or *The Waldorf* in New York. 'No,' sighed the author. 'It corresponds to the Garden of Eden. Except that they are dressed,' and as he went on when he recorded the anecdote, '[my people] have certainly not eaten of the apple of knowledge'.

The dilemma, then, that faces O'Faolain (as indeed it faces Irish letters) is to what extent Catholicism and nationalism are at loggerheads—or, put another way, to what extent do national loyalties tie Irish writers to the Catholic Church so that whatever they write must be principally for a home market that is unanimous in its religious beliefs? Remember a writer's first loyalty is always to his own countrymen, the interest of foreigners being subsidiary; universality is always achieved unconsciously—as in the case of Joyce's fame. These problems O'Faolain sees and clearly states; he knows that there are no ready-made answers to them and his work is largely an exploring of them.

In the story, 'The Silence of the Valley', which opens the volume, *A Purse of Coppers* (1937), there is a repeated harking back on the note that 'They must have had good times here, once'; and the soliloquy with which the story ends reflects the author's nostalgia for a resurrection of those 'good times':

'What image, I wondered, as I passed through them, could warm them as the Wicklow priest had warmed us for a few minutes in that carriage now chugging around the edge of the city to the sea? What image of life bursting like the spring, what triumph, what engendering love, so that those breasting mountains that now looked cold could appear brilliant and gay, the white land that seemed to sleep should appear to smile, and these people who huddled over the embers of their lives should become like the peasants who held the hand of Faust with their singing one Easter morning?'

This is a conjuring of Eden before the Fall, a seeing of the 'emerald isle' as a demi-paradise. Yet the voice of reason breaks in against that of fantasy. 'Perhaps it was foolish to wish for such an image—so magnificent that it would have the power of a resurrection call.' Still, the image is never fully vanquished.

In *Teresa and Other Stories* (1947) there is the same image of Ireland before St. Patrick, an Ireland in which there is no dichotomy between patriotism and belief because in a demi-paradisal State no conflict exists. In 'The Silence of the Valley' listen to a couple of peasants thinking and talking:

'... To pass the time she started a discussion about large families and the ethics of birth control. He said that he believed that everybody "practised it in secret", a remark which put her into such good humour that, in gratitude, she

made him happy by assuring him that in ten years' time the birth-rate in England would be the lowest in the world ; and for the innocent joy she showed at this she glowed with so much good-feeling towards him that she told him also how hateful birth-control is to the poor in the East End of London.

“ ‘ I always knew it,’ he cried joyfully. ‘ Religion has nothing to do with these things. All that counts is the Natural Law. For, as I hope you do realize, there is a Law of Nature ! ’ ”

Notice the siding with the poor—as the Fenians did. Notice, too, the natural sympathy with the people at the clergy’s expense. Here are shades of Parnell again ! Yet listen later to an extract from the end of this story, to its careful punning and play upon meaning :

‘ ‘ I hope we’ll have that salmon that came over the mountains,’ ” smiled the Celt.

‘ Nobody stirred.

‘ ‘ In America, you know, we call it the Fall.’ ”

‘ ‘ The Fall ? ” asked the priest.

‘ ‘ The fall of the leaves,’ ” explained the soldier . . .

To keep to the spirit of the punning, this is a dying fall. Notice the careful juxtaposition and frolicking with words (I use this phrase because I believe that it aptly fits O’Faolain’s whimsicality). The American soldier is of the new world, the Irish priest of the old ; but this is the reasoning of geographical fact. Both are closer related than one supposes because both were once children who shared a common heritage—namely, Eden. Yet, since then, there has been a loss of innocence, a Fall, a turning brown. The trees have shed their greenness, since perhaps even in the ‘ Natural Law ’ the burgeoning of trees is only a symbol of that other Resurrection in the spring. ‘ The spirit bloweth where it listeth,’ and so do leaves. O’Faolain’s world is one of poetry where nonsense makes sense and where nursery rhymes (which are a derivative part of folk-lore) may prove the truest stories. This is the world turned topsy-turvy, but even in a world turned topsy-turvy there is a ‘ Law of Nature ’ that holds.

If the land is let to run riot it becomes a wilderness—that is the ‘ Law of Nature ’. Yet before the Fall the world is described as a garden—Eden. Moreover, a garden suggests some kind of pattern ; it is both primitive and one of the earliest symbols

that men have ever used—and Christianity has been quick to seize upon its value. Indeed, Christ is often represented as a gardener, and the 'garden of the soul' is a phrase in common usage. Perhaps unconsciously these symbols have worked in O'Faolain's writing, since his writing is essentially the mirroring of simple folk. Between their own gardens and Eden lies that of Gethsemane ; but if the shadow of the Cross leaves a sense of guilt upon them it is much more taken for granted than it is in the characters of either Graham Greene or François Mauriac. The guilt is a birthright as opposed to something to which one is converted later. That is why in O'Faolain's novels there is a certain carefree happiness which is missing in the landscapes of Greene and Mauriac. In the stock sentence from Maynooth, 'Ah ! sure now ! We drink the faith with our mother's milk'.

This again is the explanation of simple folk—and remember that the Irish clergy are largely recruited from the peasantry. Again, one has another double image—this time the mother. Mother Earth and Mother Church : one thousand years bring little change to the shape of plough or cross. Yet looking abroad, O'Faolain sees priests who wear the same habits and soutanes as they do in Maynooth and his own county Cork, but they are men who have changed with the centuries ; they know the conditions of modern industry as well as they know their breviaries. However, in Ireland, because it has remained 'a backwater of the Faith', these changes have made little effect ; the country remains rural and, because the position of the Church has never been questioned, the unquestioning unanimous acceptance of her sovereignty has fostered an impression of time standing still. Eternity has been pitted against emancipation. Emancipation has meant exile, a turning of one's back on a demi-paradise because in 'the emerald isle' one can only worship Mother Earth if one worships Mother Church, since nationalism and Catholicism have become synonymous. This is well brought out in O'Faolain's last novel to date, *Come Back to Erin* (1940). At first headstrong and defiant, the hero leaves ; but Ireland calls to the wanderer and it is a call that cannot be denied. He returns married, but because he has married out of the Church he finds that he must either desert his wife or both his Church and country. The dilemma proves too much. St. John Hogan-Hannafey commits suicide.

In the context such an ending seems the only plausible one ;

it is far from sentimental because O'Faolain is not a sentimental author. In his biography of Newman—called *Newman's Way* (1952)—he writes of a Carlo Dolci flight of embarrassing sentiment when the preacher declares that 'so intense was the Virgin's love of God that it drew Him out of Heaven into her womb'! Greatly as he admires the Cardinal, he remains an acute critic. In fact, during his twenty-five years of writing his style has undergone several changes so that during the 'thirties in the *Left Review* one finds him bursting out—'For the love of Mike cut loose from this fixation that the artist can no longer have the guts to be what every artist has always been—an *individualist*'. But the he-man Tarzan period was short-lived and he returned to a more frolicksome, gentler prose—the prose of his first book. 'To live long is to change often.' Newman's shadow falls over the whole O'Faolain corpus; like a moth, it beats about the flickering candle—or is it that moth is none other than 'J.H.N. . . . that brave, kind, solitary, gifted, tormented angel?' Once more one finds the note of whimsicality, but with the whimsicality there is an abiding truth—a truth in the writer's fiction that has been lent strength by his realistic biographical studies of O'Neill, Daniel O'Connell and de Valera. For here once more a binding note is to be found in Newman—both an answer to the Irish Censorship Board and a link between Eden and Gethsemane: 'One cannot attempt a sinless literature of sinful man.'

# DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

By A. J. LEVENTHAL.

THE BISHOP'S BONFIRE. By Sean O'Casey. Cyril Cusack Productions. Gaiety Theatre.

CRIME PASSIONEL. By J-P. Sartre. Studio Theatre Club.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE. By Felicity Douglas. Olympia Theatre.

NIGHTMARE ABBEY. Adapted from the novel by Thomas Love Peacock by Dennis McDonnell. Dublin University Players.

Sean O'Casey's latest play has produced violent disagreement in critical circles. Broadly speaking, the native critics have been condemnatory whilst representatives of English newspapers have found that the dramatist can still hold an audience's attention. Seeing the play, which is in its third week as I write, on its eighth performance, I may have been presented with a version different from that of the first night. Cuts and speeding of tempo may explain the enthusiasm of the audience and my own enjoyment of the production.

At times there seemed to be a lack of cohesion and the strictures of some critics as to the incredibility of the characters and their remoteness from present-day Irish life were in the main justified. The play, however, seemed to be yet another of O'Casey's experiments. Since his early masterpieces he has been pre-occupied with the use of ghostly figures, with symbolic creations, even with hints of ballet to drive home some ethical, political or dramatic point without, however, failing to introduce the essential O'Casey comic character.

In *The Bishop's Bonfire* we have O'Casey burning with reforming zeal. Ireland appears to him to be held in intellectual bondage. Censorship, clerical and gombeen dominance work their frustrating will on a naturally classless, intelligent, good-humoured people. To stress his points he follows those painters of the Paris School who distort in order to emphasise, who exaggerate the features they wish to underline. So we have the Roman Catholic Canon Burren, louder and larger than life, exercising the power his office gives him with unchristian severity and his Curate Father Boheroe who, in his tolerant liberalism, obviously speaks for the author, behaving more like a dissenting pastor than a priest of the Church of Rome. Between them they manage to blight the romantic hopes of Councillor Reiligan's lively, uninhibited daughter Keelin and his employee Daniel Clooncoohy. The Canon supports the Councillor's rejection of a penniless suitor and the Curate uses the sensuous appeal of the piano to play them into a mood of elopement. But Daniel, victim of his own weakness of character and an imposed class consciousness, hasn't the nerve to take his woman away.

The second broken romance in the play deals more directly with O'Casey's belief that pietism is pathological. Manus Moanroe, a spoiled priest, loves Foorawn the Councillor's second daughter. She has taken a vow of chastity. She loves Manus but the vow to her mind is insuperable. Manus, in drunken frustration, settles the problem by shooting her. This may be melodrama but it must be

noticed that O'Casey is writing in a furious, reforming mood. Whether or not he has assessed the temper of contemporary Ireland, it is with a kind of minatory prophetic indignation that he writes his *mene mene tekel upharsin* on the proscenium. There can be no life for Manus and Foorawn and the violent end is a warning to those who hope to find happiness in escapist mysticism.

The dialogue has a rich alliterative quality and unusual images. The speech of the Codger (an old retainer of the Councillor's) moves at times into a poetised commentary on man and nature. These poetical flights have no place in the taut economy of contemporary verse drama. They belong to balladry, to the natural song of the people and might on occasion jar on an ear expecting less simple observation and more subtle thought. But O'Casey's profundity lies only in the intensity of his feeling.

In a curtain speech, Cyril Cusack (he played the rather thankless, because untheatrical, part of the Codger with a quiet sincerity) remarked that this was a religious play. It is a religious play in the sense that it tilts at the display of the outward forms of organised worship which all too often serve as a cloak for evil. A character in the play, when asked to explain a noise of rending, declared that it was the sound of clawing hands of pious fools tearing God's good manners into pieces.

O'Casey comedy and near farce was provided in good measure by Seumas Kavanagh (a mason called Prodigal), Tony Quinn (another mason) and Eddie Byrne (Councillor Reiligan). Maureen Cusack made a lovable Keelin; she was gay without *gaucherie*, forward without frowardness and pitiable in her misery. Paul Farrell maintained Canon dignity so long as his lines permitted and Patrick Layde, as the Curate, seemed by his soft approach to divine his failure in advance. The production moved smoothly.

When I got to the Studio Theatre Club to see, as I imagined, a new play by Sartre called *Crime Passionel* I found to my astonishment that I had seen the play before. I had seen it in Paris some years ago but it was then called *Les Mains Sales*. Kitty Black is an excellent translator but it does not require great ingenuity to find an English translation of the title. To give another French title is, to say the least, misleading. But that, after all, is a minor matter. *Crime Passionel* set out in large type on the hoardings obviously has box-office pull. But this play is no *News of the World* domestic triangle with an outraged husband putting paid to the account of the lover with an indignant smoking revolver. However, there is a murder, or rather an assassination (which seems the better word for a planned political liquidation) and there is a wife who brazenly offers herself to the ultimate victim, but it is clear that jealousy has not prompted the husband to shoot. We are really involved in a political debate as to whether the end justifies the means in an effort to remould the State nearer to the party's desire, whether one may lie, compromise and kill in order to further one's ideals and bring about the aims of one's party.

The curtain goes up on Olga, a militant young lady member of the Communist Party in an unnamed central European town, receiving in her room Comrade Hugo who has just been released from prison. Carrying out instructions, he had liquidated a communist leader who was believed to have strayed from the straight and narrow party line. Hugo's former comrades are not sure

that the released prisoner can still be trusted and they propose to eliminate him, just in case. Olga, however, asks that she be allowed to question him first. At this point Sartre uses the cinema technique of the flashback and the rest of the play is Hugo's confession as to what happened after he was given his assignment to kill. Sartre ran a technical risk in taking the audience into his confidence at the beginning of the play to the extent of revealing that Hugo shoots the deviating leader Hoerderer. The vacillating Hugo, a kind of Hamlet à la Sartre, a rebel against his own bourgeois class, talks and talks until he talks himself into paralysis. At moments he remembers his murder mission. Out comes the gun ; but no, this was not the moment. Later he fumbles with the butt end but again desists. We know he must pull the trigger some time before the play ends and wonder how often Sartre will try to harrow our nerves with false alarms. Though Hugo is no trigger-happy executioner, he suddenly conquers his own moody idealism and like Hamlet bursts into a fury of action. He has seen his wife in the arms of Hoederer the man he was to kill and whom he was learning to admire. At long last he shoots and inadvertently saves himself from the gallows, for the judges attribute his motive to a crime of passion—quite a pardonable minor offence in some European countries.

Melancholy lay all too heavily on the shoulders of Sidney Lazarus as Hugo, but he rose to the climax when Olga, who unexpectedly reveals that a feminine heart beats under her tunic, decides that he can still be useful to the party and need not be shot. It is then that Hugo learns that the policy of the party had changed while he was in prison and that the new party line was the one for which Hoederer was condemned and whose execution he had himself carried out. Hugo the idealist refuses to accept the change of means, no matter how worthy the end and prefers death rather than soil his hands with any dirty compromise. Eithne O'Neill was too weak for the strong willed Olga ; what was wanted was a young Countess Markievicz with Cumann na mBan training. Anne Burke, as Hugo's wife, was pleasantly skittish with her husband but made a poor man-eater when she set out to devour Hoederer. The latter part was played with a hearty confidence by Fergus Cogley who likewise dealt imaginatively with the production of a play in which a false note might have made the audience giggle and any technical over-elaboration of the flash-back might likewise have been theatrically disastrous.

Sartre is not everybody's meat but is nobody's poison. This play still has topical interest, for the world we live in is scarred with the marks of cold melodrama. Woe to him who cannot or will not keep in step or who fails to toe the party line. Sartre is a philosopher but he keeps metaphysics out of his plays. Here we have tough physical reality at war with perhaps misguided idealism.

*It's Never Too Late*, is not the type of production that gives you to think furiously or otherwise. Nevertheless at the fall of the curtain the thought struck me that Ibsen is responsible for the creation of the "modern woman." It's more than half a century since Nora walked out of her doll's house, banging the door on her poor misunderstanding husband. This was the beginning of what an advanced wife would call her emancipation. And after all what else could Laura Hammond—the central character in this play—do but abandon a husband who reads a newspaper when spoken to, a daughter who is hysterically film-struck, a stepson and his wife who pervade the house and whose infant

squalls at baby-sitters and a mother who abuses her status as a grannie by expecting to be pampered from daybreak to dusk. What else could she do, particularly when she has managed to write a best-selling novel in the midst of the domestic chaos. Mind you, she was sorely provoked before she followed in the steps of her Ibsen ancestor. She had furnished an attic for herself so that she could carry on her profitable scribbling—an occupation which she has concealed from her family. But her blundering lawyer husband thinks it would make an admirable den for himself—a retreat in which he can concentrate on the briefs he has not had time to study in Chambers.

In her new-found independence Laura drops the whole family, leaving them to fend for themselves. A typical career wife, she says farewell to St. John's Wood and repairs to a penthouse flat in Knightsbridge under the aegis of her publisher—a colourless, if practical, individual who does not allow his love to interfere with business. But despite the peaceful atmosphere of her penthouse she finds that she cannot write a line. Believe it or not, fiction will only flow from her pen in surroundings of domestic turmoil, in a household like that of the Sanger family in the *Constant Nymph*.

The dialogue was not particularly brilliant but it does carry the plot along. The biggest laugh came when the sex was changed in an ancient joke. "There's a man in your bedroom," says Tessa the film-struck daughter when she visits her mother in her flat. "That's not a man," is the reply, "it's your father."

Perhaps the best conceived and best acted part was that of Grannie, played by Carol Bailey, who protests she never wants to eat, but is cross when she misses her tea. Ivor Salter, as the husband, put on a male stupidity which should have been lovable but wasn't. It is in character that he compromises himself when found by his wife apparently embracing Mrs. Dixon, a man-eating neighbour. But the poor innocent is only extracting coal dust from her possessive eye. Madge White was a lively Mrs. Dixon. The main part was taken by Barbara James. It took nearly a whole act to accustom myself to a somewhat thinnish voice but her acting improved as the play progressed and she triumphantly carried this rather frail play to its happy noisy climax.

This is the second play at the Olympia Theatre by the same company. A cross-channel repertory group calls for comparison with our own Abbey theatre. It can be said that our native actors show more versatility although we have precious little repertory in these days of long runs.

*It's Never Too Late* makes no great demands on the intelligence. In fact, to enjoy the play the critical apparatus must be put aside. But the incredible, like a fairy tale, can be entertaining and chesnuts, however old, if warmed at a stage fire, can be quite palatable.

I have little space to pay tribute to a remarkably fine adaptation by Dennis McDonnell of Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* and the fine performance given by the University Players—a performance which won them the prize at the Universities Dramatic Festival. Shelley, who is himself satirised as Scythorp in the play, wrote that Peacock was too learned for the shallow age in which he was born,

. . . let his page

Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
Fold itself up for the serener clime  
Of years to come.

That time has come.

The two ladies who came into Scythorp's life were admirably cast : Phoebe Burn-Murdoch and Valerie Craig. Perhaps the latter, as Stella, who must be Mary in the Shelley story, did not quite suggest what Mary might have been imagined to be like, but her statuesque beauty and confident acting made amends.

### Art Notes

*By Edward Sheehy.*

PAINTINGS BY JACK B. YEATS. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

PAINTINGS BY DANIEL O'NEILL. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

Two very important exhibitions give me something to write about in what is usually a blank season. Unfortunately I missed the Italian Exhibition at Charlemont House, though I deny that the fault was mine. Not being a constant reader of the daily press it was over before I was aware of it, to my disappointment ; nor did I receive any official intimation.

Painters as perennially prolific as Jack B. Yeats usually end by repeating themselves. The brush falters or the imagination flags ; the same patterns reappear losing with each repetition a little of their vitality. Yeats, in his eighties, after a lifetime of painting, is still a painter of unbelievable energy and inexhaustible poetic invention. One is often asked if Yeats is a great painter ; if his work will live. That is a question that cannot be answered by any contemporary critic. To me his work has the stamp of genius. It is true that he flouts practically all the accepted canons. He is often literary, more often obscure. He is an unashamed Romantic at a period when R. is not in fashion. He is the celebrant of a private *temps perdu* inhabited by a fantastic diversity of beings, tinkers, and circus folk, pirates and Red Indians ; decaying gentry in their fading drawing-rooms ; peasants in their murky western pubs. His imagination knows no frontiers between the real and the unreal, or perhaps it would be more true to say that he lives in a Platonic world where the creations of mind have the greater reality. But whatever the original spur to composition, he transmutes the moment with such intense passion that it achieves an independent and a vivid life far transcending its origin. I wonder how many will recognise the distant source of the magnificent *My Beautiful, My Beautiful* in the sentimental drawing-room lyric "The Arab's Farewell to his Favourite Steed" ; or connect the wild freedom of *Follow* with the adventures of Buffalo Bill. But these pictures are not mere illustrations, they are truly realisations in paint of what those experiences once meant to the imagination of boyhood. The same is true of *The Explorer Rebuffed* which concentrates the Romantic appeal of the uninhabited island. On the other hand you have his conversation pieces, *Charade*, which to me suggests *Dubliners* without my quite knowing why, or *He will not sign*, and you find everyday life at the same imaginative remove. But Yeats' brilliant colour is his chief virtue and is a perpetual delight. One might even say that the subject matter of any picture is merely the phrase from which a whole chromatic symphony has its impulse.

Daniel O'Neill is another poetic painter, but one whose art is used to transmute the immediate reality into something rich and strange. His palette is

reserved and subtle, but his chief emphasis is on quality which is always subordinated to the immediate needs of his subject. At one time O'Neill's facile mastery of his medium; together with a few derived mannerisms suggestive sometimes of Renoir, sometimes of Vlaminck, threatened his development; but his recent work shows that he has completely eliminated those dangers. *Actors* and *Funfair* are beautiful pictures, fresh, lively and full of vitality. I would have called them typical of his best work but for signs of a new development, evident in the fine landscape *Looking towards Lough Neagh* and in *Tanglewood*, which might be described as a movement nearer realism while still retaining the primacy of the medium. The former work has a calm and a nobility rare in modern landscape.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**THE EARLY IRISH STAGE.** By William Smith Clark. Oxford University Press.  
30s.

It definitely emerges from Mr. Clark's book that the early Irish stage was not particularly Irish. This, of course, is natural enough in the light of Irish history during the period covered, viz., from its beginnings until 1720. Kilkenny with its Corpus Christi plays and Jesuit performances in the first half of the seventeenth century seems to have provided the only genuine native contribution. For the rest, the stage history has mainly to do with English plays and English companies. It makes rewarding reading for Mr. Clark has added much to what was previously known.

Miss Stockwell has already covered the ground but choosing a longer period, left gaps, particularly in the initial history of the Irish stage. These gaps are filled in this work. Going back to original sources, the author was able to correct many errors in dating which earlier writers were content to accept from Chetwood's *General History of the Stage* published in 1749. Whilst Mr. Clark draws attention to the misdating by one year on the part of Wilkes, Harris, Hitchcock and Gilbert of the collapse of the galleries of the Smock Alley Theatre in 1670, he omits to note, however, a more serious discrepancy on the part of J. Fitzgerald Molloy in *The Romance of the Irish Stage* (1897) despite the fact that this book is mentioned in the very adequate bibliography.

The discrepancy is particularly marked, for, according to Molloy, the gallery collapsed in 1701. The latter refers to the outcry by "all good Christians" that the destruction of the house was due to divine interference because of the performance of Shadwell's "loose play" *The Libertine*. Mr. Clark dates the production of this play as 1685, so that Molloy is doubly wrong. He is right, however, in stressing how the Puritans reacted to the catastrophe but the play in question was Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which satirised them and evoked the pulpit pronouncement that this was no accident but the hand of an angry God.

Mr. Clark puts his finger on the reasons for the barrenness of native creative talent :

" Both the management and the influential supporters of the Theatre Royal in Dublin looked upon it as an outpost of the London stage, regularly taking from the latter its cues as to repertory ; they never conceived that the Theatre Royal ought to bend its efforts towards stimulating the residents of Ireland to the composition of original plays in order to build up a distinct theatrical bill-of-fare for the country. The sterile notion of the inevitable colonial character of the Irish stage took deep root in the Restoration era among Irishmen of all stations and thenceforth put an effective damper on their creative activity as long as they stayed at home."

And so we had Farquhar who, like Southerne and Congreve before him, did not offer Ireland the first fruits of his dramatic creation.

This is a scholarly and well documented work. It might not have been so thorough a study were it not for the fact that the author was able to draw upon the notes left by the late W. J. Lawrence (a distinguished contributor to this Magazine) who had before his death amassed a considerable corpus of information about Irish theatricals from the seventeenth century onwards. Mr. Clark acknowledges his debt as a pupil who owes to his master the impetus to write this book and the bones of its structure.

A. J. L.

THE STRANGER IN IRELAND. By Constantia Maxwell. Jonathan Cape. 25s.

Using scholarship with a nice avoidance of pedantry, Dr. Maxwell has created a fascinating book, which through a misunderstanding was not reviewed in this magazine on its appearance last year. Choosing nineteen famous or little-known visitors to Ireland she presents our country as they saw it at various periods in its always disturbed and terrible history from the reign of Elizabeth I to The Great Famine. Each of the four sections (*Elizabethan Ireland, Ireland in the Seventeenth Century, Ireland in The Eighteenth Century, Ireland from The Union to The Great Famine*), is preceded by a short scholarly and objective introduction. The "Strangers" are allowed to speak for themselves—that is to say we are given many extracts from their writings—but both they themselves and their comments are reviewed under the steady, uncompromising eye of knowledge. "Some of them were wiser and more truthful than others," says Dr. Maxwell of her team, "but all of them have the same merit that their eye directed their pens." Not all deserve the title of "Stranger,"—Edmund Spenser, for instance, who spent nearly eighteen years in Ireland as a hard-working government official or harassed colonist; or Charles Biancouri, the almost penniless Italian lad who during his seventy-three years in Ireland revolutionised transport and made a fortune with his "long cars." Dr. Maxwell does not always choose the most famous or obvious Strangers—Sir Walter Raleigh appears only in reference to his association with Spenser, and Shelley's famous visit is not referred to. This is as it should be, for Dr. Maxwell was not in search of names or individualities, but of shrewd and vocal observers. The earlier part of the book, while never heavy or pedantic, moves a little stiffly when compared with the ease and freedom of its passage through the eighteenth century and onward. The chapters given to that delightful Englishwoman, the wife of Swift's friend, Dr. Delany of Delville; to the poor but cheerful foot traveller, Le Chevalier de la

Tocuaye, with his umbrella and his ingenious disposal of his light luggage about his person, and to Sir Walter Scott's visit are a sheer delight. It gives one a strange pleasure, touched with sharp regret, to read of Lockhart's surprise on "finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military genius . . ." and of how, when Sir Walter "entered a street the watch-word was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shop-keepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot wheels of a conqueror." As to the series of pictures of the state of Ireland and its inhabitants presented by these Strangers, there is nothing new, there could be nothing new, in them. Usually, however severe the comments, there are wisdom and justice enough to point to the causes, economic, historic and religious, of poverty, filth, backwardness and beggary, the lack of neatness and order; and almost all pay tribute to the cheerful bravery, the generosity, hospitality and intelligence of the people. "The whole country" wrote Carlyle in 1849, after the Great Famine, "figures in my mind like a ragged coat; one huge beggar's gabardine." He not only found the people miserable, but the country itself bare and dreary, and exclaimed: "Oh for men, pickmen, spadesmen and masters to guide them." But Dr. Maxwell follows with these words, almost the last of this most interesting presentation of some three hundred years of Irish history: "Public opinion in England was slowly but very slowly working towards a change, but how fortunate for Ireland that a saving light was to come out of herself . . .".

W. P. M.

**THE FORTUNES OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE.** By Daniel Corkery. C. J. Fallon Ltd. 2s.

A remark in a prefatory note Corkery has written to this little book of his suggests its significance straight away. "Trying to realise the ups-and-downs of an ancient language . . .," he says, "is really feeling for the very pulse of a nation's existence." And he later develops that, with a comparison which I thought illuminating: "The tradition of the Irish people is to be understood and experienced with intimacy only in the Irish language. It would be impossible that it could be come upon in the English language. One might as well expect to come intimately upon Indian tradition in the same language . . ."

Corkery opens his story with the fusion of the culture of the Gaels, who are believed to have come to Ireland somewhere between five hundred and a thousand years before Christianity came, and the culture embodied in the older Ivernic dialects. He writes proudly of the components of that pre-Christian Irish life which was to weave a spell which still exercises itself upon us in the twentieth century in the great complex of living tradition: "Nowhere else," he says, "can one think of finding such a perfect kneading of such ingredients as history, literature, law (including land) into one harmonious cultural system." He is as happy as the scholar-poet can afford to be in that Golden Age in which Christianity re-fertilised that great seed-bed: "A more gracious golden age, one sweeter in the spirit, no land has ever known. One wonders what the Marxian economic key to history would make of it all!"

Adverting to the growth of monasticism, he shows how the Christian intelligence replaced that of the Druids without breaking up the traditional occupation

with literature, law and history, and how, in (for the Europe of that day) a quite unique way, the Irish vernacular was admitted to the great monastic schools, as Latin also was to the secular schools. The effect of this warm current flowing through the Irish intellect can hardly be over-emphasised. "Elsewhere Latin and that alone was the formal, the learned, tongue, for manuscript and monument. It is not found inscribed on any Irish tombstone until the fourteenth century."

He finds many impressive, and obviously valid, parallels between that older Ireland and ancient Greece. In Irish, he asserts, too, is the homogeneity which is the mark of every classic literature—by which he means, simply, that the language has always been capable of making thoroughly its own whatever it takes in from outside. He quotes Flower in dating the beginnings of "Irish literature as we know it today" in the eighth and ninth centuries—that was the time in which it took shape. "It was to become a vast edifice," he goes on, "what between the sagas, the lyric poetry in Old Irish, the romances in Middle and Early Modern Irish, the luminous bardic poetry, written continuously from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth, the more popular poetry that followed and the new prose—a vast edifice indeed built up during a thousand years. Yet one finds in it all an astonishing homogeneity. Those same ten centuries could hardly have been more awry than they were; for all that a corpus of literature less awry is nowhere else to be come upon."

Already you will have noted the absurd warmth with which this man writes. He is forever enthusing about some feature of his subject which is without equal, or almost. Yet, though we would indeed, perhaps, occasionally make reservations on detail, we know that the great points he makes are perfectly legitimate . . . and more: profoundly significant. His style is that which we have come to regard as personal to him by this time—conversationally (on occasion, confusingly) diffuse, energetic but unhurried, its vocabulary and structure touched at times with a sort of classical grandeur. To dip into it again some time after reading it through is to find oneself stimulated anew. For everywhere it is warm with love of its subject, warm as a brooding bird's nest. And it has the virtues and the vices of a book written from the very heart of its matter.

Its virtues are beautifully clear; its vices, I think, few. One would like to take him up on just a few things. He is thoroughly right in marking how elegantly and naturally Irish succeeds in conveying what it is intended to convey without need of stress—in this it is undoubtedly vastly superior to English, for instance. "Precision is its note," he writes. In this important respect, that is true; yet one has to add that Irish as an instrument today will now again have to be used with care and a familiarity with all the main dialects before much of its rich vocabulary achieves the aptness of definition which characterises its syntax. Again, he is so absorbed by nationality as a thing ripening over a thousand years that on occasion he all but falls into the error of racism, which, of course, a thoughtful appreciation of nationality automatically invalidates, for the action of Fant, the 18th century Protestant farmer near Kilmallock who organised his neighbours and with them at midnight levelled the fences built around the commonages comes very largely from that sense of humanitarian idealism which is born of a rightly valued community-life, of which nationality is the flower, and to half-denry that nationality can speak of its accumulation of wisdom to men of such

a background is to propose something which I personally would repudiate, but also to do the creative and synthesising genius of nationality less than justice.

He writes memorably of what a dominating position Irish held in the national life under those astonishing collections of highbrows, the Bardic Schools. Leaving them, he takes us down through many black centuries, down to the foundation and effect of the Gaelic League. A sad story enough.

His closing words must, I think, automatically provoke comment. "For the first time since 1169, the Irish language has a state behind it. To say this is equivalent to saying that everything has changed for it, just as everything has changed for the languages of India, Pakistan, Palestine—and indeed for the whole world." It would be wrong to underestimate what the Twenty-Six County state has done for a restoration of Irish in the last thirty years, but, quite frankly, it does look as if Palestine and India are here, indeed, teaching their grandmother the business of egg-sucking. However, Corkery has once again hit upon the significant fact. If this state does in the coming years give the language its due with the realism they show in relation to other things, the existence of a State to foster Irish may prove as important as Corkery suggests it is.

Risteárd Ó Glaisne.

DANIEL DEFOE, A STUDY IN CONFLICT. By Brian Fitzgerald. Secker & Warburg. 1954.

This is an interesting study dealing with a man of complex character, shrewd yet idealistic, public yet secret, pragmatic yet mysterious.

Daniel Foe (he invented the *particule*) was born, in 1660, of puritan-preacher-trader stock. One conflict was his internal fight between a narrow and fundamentally, commercially-inspired ethic, and the artist's love of aristocratic elegance, urbane tolerance and an orderly state of society. Defoe therefore, had much of the 'split personality' often characterising the creative artist, since, besides being a city merchant, he was also what Addison taught us to call 'a man of genius'.

Defoe would have been astonished by his later, universal fame as a 'realistic novelist'. He might even have been a trifle humiliated. For these stories—written at the age of sixty—he puritanically regarded as trivial, and they were written (very successfully) for money. Mr. Fitzgerald's able examination of *Robinson Crusoe*; *Moll Flanders*, etc., might dispose of the childish fallacy that good fiction contains no 'useful facts' or 'higher wisdom', always supposing that such mental attitudes can ever die.

With Defoe, (and in our unhappy day) there is much to be said for the contention that a business-man's factual writings, when he happens to possess vision, generosity and genius, are actually of greater value to society than his 'straight' novels. That he was a generous fighter is shown by Defoe unhesitatingly joining the ill-fated Monmouth Rebellion. He was extremely lucky to escape a horrible death. Nevertheless he shortly afterwards rode with William of Orange, thereby running the same risks again.

Generosity is important in considering Defoe's character since the great volume of his writings consist of attacks on the financier and economist, gentlemen

who have done their utmost to empty our world of generosity, and have been brilliantly successful.

It would be a mistake to regard Defoe's journalism, polemics and politico-economic satire, as merely an anticipation of Adam Smith, the Utilitarians, the Fabians and the rest. Defoe perceived the dangerous power that might be erected with the founding of the Bank of England and the National Debt. He advocated control of the Bank by the State—but in order to limit usury, not enthrone it. What such control might then have meant one cannot say. But the shameful day had not yet arrived when a Bank Governor could assert that : “ The difference between Bank and Treasury is the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedle-dee.” It was not yet—openly—the Age of Treason. And it seems certain Defoe fully comprehended the difference between natural wealth-gaining and mere money-issue.

Tragic is the fact that this great genius was so overworked by Harley, and hard necessity, that no time was available for fully working out, and exposing : “ *this Dark Gulph of General Negoce, this hidden Mystery, this half-known thing called Trade* ”. As the biographer says, “ The press of events prevented him ”. Otherwise it is not too much to believe that Defoe might have saved Europe, (and the civilized world) much humiliation, hate, poverty and moral and physical ruin.

It must be remembered that—like Adam Smith seventy years later—Defoe was writing before the Machine Age. Science had not yet developed her illimitable powers of potential wealth-gaining. Financial monopoly had not yet contrived non-stop warfare, to provide explanation and excuse for a wholesale withholding and destroying of wealth, caused actually by the price-fixing mechanism. Nor had scientists become sufficiently perverted to acquiesce in the wealth-destruction, whilst discovering ‘ natural laws ’ to justify their own complete lack of civic virtue.

Defoe was not the man to accept the sophisms of economists or other sciolists. Wealth-destruction for Power meant simply anarchy to his finely-balanced intellect. Rising, through his genius, above petty conceptions of puritan-trader, he came to detest money-morality. He disliked the type of pseudo-moralist who has an emotional appreciation of virtue without any urge to possess it. And he called the snivelling puritan preachers ‘ those clouds without rain ’.

With half the population of England paupers Defoe attacked the money-manipulation that produces beggary ; and it is heartening to read that, when he was put in the stocks, the people for whom he fought cheered instead of stoning him.

He called the Financiers ‘ double-cheaters ’. He saw ‘ the drive for exports ’ as almost identical with war. He wrote of the oligarchy of his time that : *They had exchanged the Bible of the Puritans for the Ledger. They had deserted the Good Old Cause for the Bank of England. They had foresworn international greatness for the National Debt . . . And to what end ? For the glory and magnification of the villainous stock-jobbers—those bastards who carried on war with worse weapons than swords and muskets.*

A Daniel come to judgement. Defoe ! thou should’st be living at this hour.

THE STORY OF MEDICINE. By Kenneth Walker, M.A., F.R.C.S. Cr. 8vo. Pp. 343. London: Hutchinson. 21s. net.

The publishers remark on the jacket that this is one of the most absorbing books they have produced in recent years: we agree wholly with this dictum. We have read the story from cover to cover and we look forward to reading it again. The work is divided into two parts; in the first, medical discoveries and the men responsible for them are given in chronological order; in the second half events are not placed in chronological order but a number of medical problems are set forth and the way in which these problems were solved, described. It will be found by the reader that, as the story nears its end, it becomes more and more impersonal.

In Prehistoric Medicine, the oldest evidence of illness is to be found in injuries to bones because they manage to survive; in mummies, common ailments which left their mark were gout, calculi, gallstones and tuberculosis of the spine. The witch doctor held a prime place; later the medical man was first a priest and his religious and medical duties were intermingled; the Jews of those days taught if a man lived in conformity with the Laws of Moses, he would remain healthy; hygiene and preventive medicine were the key-notes of the Talmud which contains more medicine than the Old Testament. The Greek Era was very important and lasted for six centuries before Christ to two centuries after: Epidouros was one of the chief centres; we had the good fortune to be there and saw the large open air theatre which held 20,000 people and was chiefly used to keep the friends of the patients amused. Much treatment was carried out there by means of interpretation of dreams; for faith healing it preceded Lourdes by a goodly period. Hippocrates freed medicine from superstition but there was a law expressly forbidding women to practise; this edict was changed in the Salerno School where women were admitted. Even after Greece had lost her independence, she exerted influence in the world of culture but advance in Medicine changed to Alexandria and Rome where Herophilus was the first to make a dissection in public. Between the eleventh and thirteenth century, the Medical School in the tiny town of Salerno was at its zenith and an extract taken from *De Adventu Medici* giving advice on Medicine and Ethics reads to-day as if it came from the General Medical Council. It is obvious that about this time some deterioration in medical conduct took place for the doctor is advised to do something new every day lest "they say you are good at nothing but books", and if a patient refuses to pay his account, the doctor should contrive that he takes alum instead of salt with his meat, for this will not fail to make him come out all over in spots. About 1300, Arnold of Villavo discovered brandy and Guy de Chauliac was the first to use the Trendelenberg position, which is in vogue in every Hospital to-day. As we read through the History of the Middle Ages we find Roger Bacon the first to champion the experimental method of research, thus preceding his better known namesake by three centuries. The dreadful Black Death, which was accompanied by a Mass Hysteria, was responsible for the first mention of Quarantine.

The Renaissance from 1500 to 1700 produced Michael Angelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Vesalius, and Amboise Paré was among the first of the great surgeons. Thomas Linacre and John Caius played a large part in the foundation

of the Royal College of Physicians. The seventeenth century was named the century of progress and surely it was well-named, for it produced, among others Francis Bacon, Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, Gallileo, Descart, Pasant, Boyle, Newton, Lock, Spinoza. Gallileo, who wanted to be a priest became a doctor and later a mathematician, invented the telescope, a discovery which was followed by a primitive microscope, while Sanctorius made the first clinical thermometer, and Robert Boyle by his work impelled Charles II to grant a Charter to the Royal Society. Outstanding men were Malpighi and Leeuwenhoek, the pioneer microscopists; the latter was a draper who was so prosperous that he was able to devote time to his hobby of making microscopes and was able to confirm the work of Malpighi on capillary circulation.

The reader will find much enjoyment as he reads through the pages of this wonderful encyclopedia and we can but tell of the gradual advances, the age of Specialisation, the Pasteur-Lister period, the birth of the Nursing profession, the discovery of X-Rays, the story of Surgery and Anaesthetics, the finding by Semmellweiss of the cause of Puerperal Sepsis, although this is disputed by the Manchester School who claim Charles White as its discoverer, until we come to the final chapters on mass defence against infection, deficiency diseases, public health. Last but not least the name of Pinel (1745-1826) must be mentioned for he was a pioneer in improving conditions for the insane and was nearly guillotined for his pains. Even the subjects of Quackery and Beauty specialisation are discussed.

There are some excellent and instructive Plates and other illustrations. There is nothing new under the sun. "Is there anything whereof it may be said, see this is new? it hath been already of our time, which was before us." (*Ecclesiastes*, i, 10-11).

This is a fascinating and outstanding work which will enhance the library of the doctor, the medical student and the layman.

B. S.

THE ROOTS OF CRIME. Edited by the late Sir Norwood East, M.D., F.R.C.P., with a foreword by the Rt. Hon. Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, G.C.V.O., Q.C., M.P. London : Butterworth & Co. 1954. 30s. net.

The text which seems to pervade *The Roots of Crime* is education in the home and it is difficult to decide how this education can be carried out. The ideals would be either a school for parents, or an examination by a skilled committee of those about to marry ; this would apply to all classes of society and in this education, the doctrine of spare the rod and spoil the child should be expunged. Unfortunately in the humbler classes, especially where there are large families living in cramped surroundings, the only punishment seems to be the cane, but in an ideal state there would be a substitute for this horrible method of correction. In the so-called higher strata of society the practice of sending children to preparatory boarding schools at a very early age should cease for under these circumstances parents and children can not get to know one another and moral education depends on the schoolmaster or schoolmistress who in most cases is unable to give the parental affection and care which is so necessary in early life. Each parent

must do his and her part for even the most intense maternal affection, if it is not complemented by paternal affection may predispose to crime especially in adolescence. This book is no unconsidered trifle. On the contrary it is a useful and scientific treatise of considerable value which at first reading seems to be a series of essays for those interested in psychological problems, especially for medical doctors ; but the latter remark is not entirely factual, for such problems as juvenile delinquency, corporal and capital punishment are so much in the public eye that a study of these six essays will clarify some of these difficult and important problems for the general public. Whether psychiatric treatment is the solution to the cure of crime is discussed by several of the authors and it is demonstrated clearly that whereas psychiatry is the cure in some instances it does not cover the whole question ; in relation to this, Humphreys, a Council in one of the criminal courts of London, writes " As the future of the treatment of crime lies to a large extent in the marriage of psychic and criminal procedure, it follows, if this be right, that the psychiatrist must make every effort, as soon as he enters a court of law to speed such consummation upon terms agreeable to both parties ". Sir Norwood East who edited the book before his death had an enormous experience of prison life and his opinions are obviously of value ; he can not regard crime as a disease although the result of it. A main result of his researches in Wormwood Scrubbs prison was that the most satisfactory method of dealing with abnormal and unusual types of criminal would be by the institution of a penal institution of some kind. Desmond Curran says that it is often supposed that psychiatrists consider everyone abnormal but speaking statistically this is nonsense. Schizophrenia (split mind) is so much on the tongue of the public that its symptoms are of much interest. One of the unfortunate results of modern trials is that it is possible for solicitors for the defence to importune psychiatrists until they find one who will give the evidence they want. Peter Scott, a well-known prison psychiatrist is of the opinion that delinquency is a mid-adjustment between mental illness and health, between hopelessness and helplessness. Several pages are devoted to the question of spivs, their work, clothes and appearance, language, violence, home life and sexual behaviour.

Considering the efficacy of psychiatry in treatment, there is nothing conclusive at present ; it is useful for some offenders but as unhappy records of recidivism bear witness, it may fail to benefit or at least fail to benefit permanently. All are in agreement that Probation is often effective and is principally used in helping and befriending offenders but it is of little use for those who have served a prison sentence. The term probation is reserved for those cases where the delinquent is not only released on trial but is placed under the supervision of a probation officer who is very carefully chosen ; the court is obliged to seek the consent of an offender to be put on probation if he has attained the age of 14 years.

One of the best chapters is on Remedial and Educational Psychotherapy during penal detention by Dr. Mackwood. The treatment of all kinds of offenders is discussed, some case records are given. The chief results as recorded in the summary are that the onus in all functional sickness and delinquency must rest on the individual to want sufficiently to get well, and that more sociology is needed in prisons.

Bernard Shaw in his magnificent preface to *Major Barbara* concludes :— “The crying need of the nation is not better morals, cheaper bread, temperance, liberty, culture, redemption of fallen sisters and erring brothers, not the grace, love and fellowship of the Trinity but simply for enough money ”. This seems rather grossly material in spite of the fact there are no great virtues in poverty.

The enormous power of the cinema is condemned. Between 25 and 30 million people attend weekly in England and its influence on the lives, manners and habits of the people is obvious. Criminal children when before the courts seem to think that “having seen it at the pictures” is an adequate answer to any charge. There should be special cinema shows for children in Ireland as there are in other places.

The well-known magistrate, Frank Powell, gives his views on the relation of the judge to the psychiatrist and in a deft manner analyses the cases suitable for psychiatric treatment or for punishment although it is sometimes difficult to draw a clear line between a mental and a moral defect.

A valuable Index and Glossary conclude a work of supreme importance.

B. S.

**THE STUDY OF PREHISTORY.** By J. G. D. Clark. Cambridge University Press.  
2s. 6d.

The inaugural lecture by the Disney Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, delivered in November, 1954, is devoted to a consideration of prehistory as “the one essential preface to the libraries of literate humanity.” The distinction made between its basic and autonomous substance and secondary prehistory which infers the influence of contemporary civilizations, Dr. Clark stresses the importance of a perspective from which “literate civilization appears as the merest veneer and the range of experience permitted by farming as hardly more than superficial. Even the engravings, paintings and reliefs which speak to us with so much human feeling from the walls and ceilings of Altamira, Lascaux and Angles-sur l’Anglin are crowded into the final phases of the Pleistocene. That most of human life has been passed in a state of savagery . . . . destitute of any developed aesthetic or religious expression, is surely in its way as significant as the revelation by psychology of the role of infancy and of the unconscious mind in the life of the individual : at least we no longer have any occasion to feel surprised, impatient or disillusioned by the tastes and passions of mankind.” This is a soberly eloquent discussion of the scope of prehistory and its achievements.

**THE FRENCH LANGUAGE TO-DAY.** By L. C. Harmer. Hutchinson’s University Library. 10s. 6d.

This is an interesting and erudite book on the genius of the French language. The author reminds us that the whole population of France, from the Immortals to the *concierges*, take a passionate interest in linguistic subtleties. Mr. L. C. Harmer challenges, however, claims that French is a tongue possessing inherently greater “logic” or greater “clarity” than other civilised tongues.

Perhaps few things, today, could be more important than that of clearly defined speech. One recalls Ezra Pound’s Chinese sage who was asked how he

would act were he to find himself in the embarrassing position of dictator. The philosopher answered that he would first remodel language and clearly define current terms, his object being to render despotism ineffective. This suggests that clarity in human speech comes with the usage of a truly civilised epoch, and that in a disintegrating society both authors and grammarians are powerless against the incoherencies of jargon. When the poet is despised it is difficult for him to "donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu."

The scholarly author appreciates of course that "clarity" is no mere matter of correctness of syntax or of deft exposition. We do not "understand" ideas merely with the intellect; and a competent dramatist will bring home to an audience's apprehensions profound subtleties, calling as much for finely-balanced emotions and "sense of value," as for intellectual perceptions, for their comprehension. In this context it is interesting to note that poets like Racine once submitted their work for the approval of grammarians.

There is an amusing chapter on French passion for truncated forms coupled with a passing phase of anglomania. For some time we have been familiar with the smoking-jacket or dinner jacket clipped to *le smoking*. We now have to struggle not only with *star*, *gang*, and *une pin-up*, but with the side-car reduced to *side*, and the pull-over to *pull*. Bathing-slips become *un slip*, and apparently on French beaches the ladies go down to the sea in slips. But a petticoat—among other things—is also called a slip; so it looks as though the Englishman studying modern French will also have to relearn his own language.

English-speaking folk listening to a French film (whilst trying to ignore sub-titles) will also experience difficulties. French is more monosyllabic than the other Romance languages, and the liaison makes things tougher. Did the actor say: *Il est ouvert*, or *Il est tout vert*? Only a thorough grasp of the context will resolve such difficulties. But on the other hand French literary language differs widely from the colloquial and many modern authors have a taste for archaisms, so perhaps slang is kept in its proper place.

There is much to be learned from Mr. Harmer's study and it will repay careful reading. Reverting to clarity there is a sentence on Page 16 which possibly the author would like to re-examine. Here it is: "Secondly, when in 1932, after a delay of some three hundred years, the Academy implemented part of Article 26 of their statutes and produced a grammar, the book, although it is most inadequate, is by no means entirely accurate, and was sensibly and justifiably consigned to the scrap-heap by the public within a couple of years of its appearance, sold like the proverbial hot cakes."

M. C.

AESTHETICISM AND OSCAR WILDE. Part I. 'Life and Letters'. By Aatos Ojala. The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Helsinki. 800 mk.

This first part of a work by a Finnish scholar goes as far as any examination of the relevant literary material and an apparatus of psychological terms allow to place Wilde high in the line of distinguished aesthetes.

"In Wilde's case it is needless to make any distinction between 'artistic' and 'practical' aestheticism: aestheticism was his philosophy as well as his practice. It was the only attitude towards life that he conceived

to be possible, the only aspect in which he could view the world and see any meaning in it. There was for him no reality in life save through art, in art, and as art."

The Wildean improvisations on themes of Morris, Ruskin and Pater and the wit so invested, the vulgarity denied, it is difficult to recognize the *poseur*, the sentimentalist or the author of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The foreigner's point of view is, of course, interesting, and the labour and enthusiasm given to the thesis command respect ; but in a wider context—say, the history of aestheticism from Florentine influence in the early seventeenth century to the twentieth century's conflicting manifestos—the attitudes of a Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, a Gerard de Nerval, a Wilde appear rather less significant.

"Wilde seems to have been one of those people whose lives are passed in an eternal conflict between 'Spleen and Ideal'. As we have seen, this was perhaps the chief agent of all aestheticism, and surely explains the curious dichotomy that aestheticism manifests : on the one hand the cult of sensuous beauty, the tendency towards sensuality and sensationalism, the love of subtle pleasures, in short, a certain nearness to the Earth, on the other the obsession with sin and guilt, the inclination towards fatalism and abstract mysticism, in short, a certain remoteness from the Earth."

Whether Wilde's literary achievement endures such weighty interpretation is a matter of opinion ; but the sordid follies and the persistent adolescence look no prettier for their aesthetic shelter.

**ATLANTIS.** By John Cowper Powys. Macdonald. 15s.

**THE CORNER-STONE.** By Zoé Oldenbourg. Translated by Edward Hyams. Gollancz. 15s.

The story of *Atlantis* begins in the royal palace in Ithaca. The animate and inanimate stir, as if after a long sleep, and stretch towards the present ; and Odysseus, become a "subtle and complicated" old man, sails to the drowned Atlantis and finally arrives at Manhattan. The many characters—stone or club of Herakles, insects, dryads or human beings—are part chorus, part slow surge tracing a cosmic movement, for the book is written in praise of those who, escaping from the rigid world of science and purpose, dive into a deep salt sea : the adventurers, the drifters "allowed by Atropos the privilege of being porous to more than one universe and being aware of more than one Space and of more than one Time." Mr. John Cowper Powys' familiarity with the Homeric poems, his language, poetic, stark, or profuse as that of Rabelais, his philosophy of life and originality as a writer have shaped a novel whose singular felicity, wit and vigour will delight the unhurried reader.

For her novel, *La Pierre Angulaire*—admirably translated by Mr. Edward Hyams—Madame Oldenbourg was awarded the Prix Fémina in 1954. To describe it as a reconstruction of the French medieval world does less than justice to a remarkable work.

"The roofs of the houses gleamed in the red light of the rising sun and the bells were still ringing ; at the main gate of the town the sentries hailed each other from rampart to rampart, their pikes sharply black

against the lightening sky. The rays of sunshine penetrating in clusters from beyond the wall drove pointed like arrows between steeples and gables, the wings of swallows were sharp edged as keen knives and, beyond the wall, on the slopes, the trees stood like a portcullis about the town. The faces of men on the road were all beautiful and austere, like the faces of angels on the Day of Judgement . . . And then the sun absorbed and drowned town and fields and woods in its light. The meadows sang and the fields were all of gold and in the distance the wooded hills were lost behind a veil of sunlight."

In this account of three generations—the old crusader, fearless and single of purpose, and taken prisoner by the Saracens, his avaricious son, and the grandson sensitive to the knightly virtues—Madame Oldenbourg recovers that submerged world; and her profound knowledge of its historical and religious pattern persuades us that nothing has been lost of the grace and naivety, the cruelty and faith, the terrors and dedication of the age.

**CYMBELINE.** The Arden Shakespeare. Edited by J. M. Nosworthy. Methuen. 18s.

For the revised Arden edition of Shakespeare, Mr. J. M. Nosworthy has done much in his introductory essay and notes to stimulate the critical study, for many years curiously inert, of *Cymbeline*. He gives lengthy consideration to the play's sources—Holinshed and Boccaccio, *Love and Fortune*, and the tale of *Frederick of Genoa*, which is printed in an appendix—and to the problems that engaged the Jacobean Shakespeare. A notable examination of its style and images and symbolism concludes: ". . . it has been customary to regard the play as an oddly unaccountable lapse which, in view of preceding tragedy and succeeding romance, may be excused but must, at all costs, be deplored. If I demur, it is because I believe that *Cymbeline*, no less than the last works of Beethoven, is a comprehensive piece of impressionism, that it finally expresses something which Shakespeare never quite achieves elsewhere, and that, when all the still valid objections have been taken into account, it must yet be reckoned among his supreme utterances."

**A SOURCE BOOK OF SCOTTISH HISTORY.** Volume Three. 1567 to 1707. Edited by William Croft Dickinson and Gordon Donaldson. Nelson. 21s.

**THE IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION.** By James Hogan. Irish Historical Series, No. 1. Cork University Press. 2s. 6d.

The third volume of *A Source Book of Scottish History* impressively arranges and connects a wealth of material covering the years from the deposition of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the Treaty of Union. Broadly, the editors' aim has been to devote the first half of the book to the Presbyterian-Episcopalian controversy and the Covenanting movement; and the selected texts and commentary provide a balanced and unusually lucid treatment of the ecclesiastical politics that dominated the period. The second part is concerned with foreign affairs, with parliamentary, social, economic and educational history, and the many extracts are illuminating and often fascinating in their detail.

Professor Hogan's pamphlet, the expansion of a lecture delivered at University College, Cork, in May, 1953, describes the invaluable work done by the Irish

Manuscripts Commission to trace source material and make it available for students. The wide dispersal and fate of Irish records, the reproductions in facsimile of manuscripts from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries, the publication of privately collected papers—rental records, household accounts and correspondence—and documents referring to seventeenth-century emigration to the New World: on such matters Professor Hogan writes authoritatively. As the first of a new series dealing with aspects of Irish History, to be published by the Cork University Press, his survey could not be bettered.

**RECURRENT MALADIES IN SCHOLARLY WRITING.** By Eugene S. McCartney. Michigan University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 20s.

Dr. McCartney, who for many years edited publications of the Michigan University Press, has put in book form a series of articles written for the *Michigan Alumnus* on his labours as 'a professional faultfinder'. The suspicion with which he received academic manuscripts was justified: the scholar, young or old, is an uncouth creature, fumbling with words, tendentious, inconsistent, nodding, his rhetoric faded or absurd. So detailed and alarming is this examination of the ailments and 'the general pathology' of manuscripts that the reader would become a hopeless valetudinarian were it not for Dr. McCartney's humour, the remarkable variety of his examples, and the diverting illustrations to his book.

**THE CELLULOID MISTRESS.** By Rodney Ackland and Elspeth Grant. Allan Wingate. 1954.

A well-planned collaboration produces a chronicle that is extremely readable. This story of a born man of the Theatre lost in Film Cuckoo-Land is, on the surface gay, highly entertaining and often witty. Below the surface it is an important record and social document.

Those creative artists, (especially dramatists) who wistfully imagine that 'mechanical entertainments' can be of benefit to them, whilst they keep their integrity, may read this lively book, and learn. The bit of machinery that dominates all machines is costing-accountancy, credits—in short, Money. And, if civilization itself cannot come to terms with Money, what chance has the individual artist who puts true value above measurement?

The sub-title of this book is: "The Custard Pie of Dr. Caligari". A better one might be: "For Those In Peril On the Screen": or, more simply, "Tropism". That the author of *After October* should, since the age of thirteen, pursue this Celluloid Strumpet, exhausting fine creative effort, flinging himself against the brutal indifference of 'business executives', etc.—this is quite incredible. The fault is not in our film stars but in ourselves. Mr. Ackland's beloved Lillian Gish, warned him, and gave him the best of advice. But the man who should have worked for the Theatre is besotted. It is the love of the creative moth for a cold, mercenary star.

Has Mr. Ackland learned? Passages in the book suggests that he has. Money is power—not to give, but to withhold and destroy. Money talks—but it has an impediment in its speech. In France, Mr. Ackland might have ordered these things better. Some patron, such as financed Jean Cocteau (one of whose

films has run 15 years in New York) might have supported Mr. Ackland. But, why in the name of windmills and rueful countenances, did not Mr. Ackland secure complete success in the Theatre *first*. Then the Celluloid Mistress would have smiled through her glycerine tears at him, whilst the seemingly ineluctable dogmas of the 'executives' would have faded out in one glorious technicolour leer.

Is it worth while asking if the Celluloid Mistress can herself learn anything from this chronicle? Perhaps it is. The infatuated Mr. Ackland actually states that the Theatre is the enemy of the films—which is like saying that the Christian martyrs in the arena behaved brutally to the attacking lions. Money may know better than Mr. Ackland. It may know that without the warm humanity, the integrity and the genius commanded by the Theatre, celluloid itself is due for an all-time fade. It will be destroyed by some other machine. It can be saved only by its appreciation of the Rodney Acklands it has served so scurvily. Behind the whole of human existence—behind even Money—there has to be a dream; and, without that, life becomes a nightmare.

M. C.

**THE PONY CLUB ANNUAL.** Published for the British Horse Society by the Naldrett Press. London. 12/6 net.

**IRISH HUNTING.** By Muriel Bowen. Illustrated by Lionel Edwards, R.I. Tralee. The Kerryman Ltd. 12/6 net.

These two publications are certainly dainty dishes to set before a horselover and the British Horse Society deserves the thanks of hunting men, women, and last but not least children, for apart from other considerations, the Pony Club was initially founded to teach the young fox-hunter the care of his hunter and also how to behave in the hunting field; and there are many adults who could learn hunting etiquette from pony club members. The Pony Club Annual is in its fifth edition and sustains its previous reputation. What a variety of information we get! We read about the visit of the Queen to the Colonies where she showed her well-known interest in horses by visiting the clubs. Bruce Roberts has some fascinating stories about costers and their donkeys; and even the legend of how Bellerephon and Pegasus fought the Chimera is here for our pleasure. Leslie Daiken who is chairman of the Toy Museum shows how horses have influenced life since the cradle; he gives the history of toy horses, from the hobby horse to the four-legged wheelhorse, and thence to the rocking horse. This book should be in the possession of all, especially children who are interested in the equine art. Various well-known artists have contributed interesting and amusing illustrations.

*Irish Hunting* has taken the Authoress five years to compile; in her research she has travelled widely and has hunted with every Pack in Ireland. She writes with such gusto that the reader is over the fences with her. Foxhunting did not come into vogue until 1762, but it was not until the time of the great Meynell that it really came to stay; stag hunting was more popular before then. Colonel

Llewellyn, the famous show jumper says in his Introduction that " Each chapter makes me feel an almost uncontrollable desire to drop everything in order to share at least some of the amusing and thrilling adventures which makes her book so fascinating ". We heartily agree with these observations. There are so many amazing adventures portrayed, that a review would be too lengthy if efforts were made even to select some of them. Several of the Hunts have had Masters from the same family for many years and in the Carlow Hunt there have only been four Masters in 144 years ; the well-known and intrepid Mrs. Hall who has grown-up grandchildren is still in charge of the Field.

Lionel Edwards has contributed some delightful line drawings ; he was so alarmed when he met the Ballymurphy double in Carlow that he returned the next day to measure it. From the bottom of the ditch to the take-off, it measures 10 feet and across the top it was six feet wide. The origins of all Irish Hunts, whether Stag, Fox or Hare are given ; many thrilling hunts are described. Miss Bowen has produced what may veritably be called a " Who's Who " and a " What's What " in Hunting.

B. S.

**BAILY'S HUNTING DIRECTORY, 1954-55,** with Diary and Hunt Maps. Forty-ninth year. Cr. 8vo. Pp. 644. London. Vinton & Co. 25/- net.

This is truly a vade-mecum for the hunting man ; it is absolutely comprehensive. The amount of information contained is colossal ; some thrilling runs are recorded. Every country is mentioned, including Pakistan and East Africa where respectively the jackal and the reedbuck are hunted. Details of 557 Packs are described ; what a wonderful sport is hunting ! We find the names of the officers of the various hunts, the days of the meets, even the correct clothes. Three instructive hunt maps are included, so that the stranger, whether he be in England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland, will be able to find his way.

This is a hunting man's bible where even the data about point-to-point meetings are given.

As is very necessary in a book of this kind, it is well-bound and printed on good paper.

Baily's Directory is nearly a necessity for those who hunt.

B. S.

**BEST HUNTING STORIES.** Edited by John Welcome and Vincent Orchard. Cr. 8vo. Pp. 320. London. Faber and Faber. 1954. 15/- net.

In this mixed grill, the reader's choice will range from Ireland to Wellington's pack of hounds in the Peninsula, to the Southern States of America, back again to the Shires and all over the length and breadth of England with packs famous and obscure, fashionable and unfashionable. Among many of the really good stories which will, we are confident, refresh the palates in the smoking room after a good hunt is one of the exploits of the celebrated Brigadier Gerard, as related by Conan Doyle; our second choice is " The man in ratcatcher " by Sapper; this is most dramatic and would make an excellent tale for the screen. An unusual

episode reported is that of a man who found he could only ride side saddle, because of a broken leg. The reader will enjoy any of the eighteen stories ; Surtees, Somerville and Ross, Charles Lever, Siegfried Sassoon, M. J. Farrell are among those represented.

This is a work essentially for the hunting man and woman for whom it will be a welcome gift.

B. S.

**THE NURSING COUPLE.** By Merell P. Middlemore, M.D. London : Cassell & Co. 1953. 7/6 net.

Unfortunately the authoress who did so much research on nursing died before the publication of this book, but Drs. Ella Sharpe and Joan Malleson have read and approved of the manuscript. And what is it all about ? The nursing couple are the mother and child and the three fundamental notes of importance are the physiology, pathology, and psychology of nursing. We who have been trained to feed the baby by the clock are fain to disagree with the words in the Introduction :—" Witness for example the fantastic theory that one should not pick up a child when it cries ; or that it must not be fed when it is hungry, unless the hunger falls at a given moment in a time-table drawn up by adults ". Babies are like adults whose digestions will disintegrate if feeding is not carried out at regular intervals. No mother should be persuaded to nurse if it is distasteful to her, nor should the breast be forced on the infant if he is not disposed to take it. Although natural feeding is the ideal, the discovery of vitamines, the advances in the clean preparation of milk and bottles, and vaccination against tuberculosis make bottle feeding nearly a safe procedure. Baby psychology is an interesting study, but an understanding of it chiefly requires common sense on the part of the mother or nurse. Dr. Glover in the foreword says that every mother who can afford it should buy three copies of the book, one for herself, one for her doctor, and one for the nurse. Why not get a fourth for the father ? This is an interesting study but should be read with caution. Nursing mothers are best advised to consult their paediatrician or visit an Infant Clinic.

B. S.

**FIRST INTERVAL.** The Autobiography of Donald Wolfit. London. Oldhams Press Ltd. 16s. net.

Donald Wolfit is a great man of the Theatre ; we started to count the number of parts he has played but gave it up ; they are too numerous. Shakespeare, from the commencement of his career, has been his chief love as he clearly shows when he speaks of putting himself at the services of the master dramatist. We have witnessed his acting and productions on many occasions ; his Lear, Petruchio, Volpone and the Wandering Jew were outstanding performances.

His early life at Newark was not interesting ; he had ideas of being a clergyman and was a schoolmaster for a year. After he had been taken as a child to his first theatre, he knew this was his métier. He describes his hard apprenticeship ; his various tours until he became an actor-manager. Many famous names

D

appear in the pages. Tree said it takes six years to make a leading woman and twelve years a leading man ; Wolfit was in his thirteenth year as an actor when he became one. Lately he has become a star in the cinema and on television ; we hope he will not desert the stage for these rather artificial substitutes. There are photographs of the Author and others in various roles and there is a satisfactory Index.

This autobiography will appeal to all lovers of the Thespian Art.

B. S.

THE WESTMINSTER ABBEY SINGERS. By Edward Pine. Dobson. 18s.

The Senior Master of Westminster Abbey's Choir School has written a most interesting account of the School as an important and often lively part of the Abbey's history. Mr. Pine has chosen the year 1479 as his starting point; and he describes the manner in which the choirboys lived, their work and diversions, the ceremonies in which they had a part, from the time when choristers were boy players and "little madrigalists carted about by a Farrant or a Cooke" to the present day when their existence is very much like that led in the ordinary preparatory school. There are many glimpses, too, of the famous, and some delightful stories.

English history is recorded as it affected the School: the uncertainties of the Tudor period and the dissolution of the monasteries; the austere regulations of the Commonwealth; the eighteenth century, condemned here as ecclesiastically "an age of mildew" with, at the Abbey, "outbursts of ostentatious praise"; the inertia after the wars against Napoleon reflected in the neglected state of the School; and on down to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Mr. Pine's book —the first on the subject—is most carefully documented and skilfully presented.

BIBLIOMANIA. By Gustave Flaubert. Illustrated by Arthur Wragg.  
I KISS YOUR HANDS. The Letters of Guy de Maupassant and Marie Bashkirtseff.  
Illustrated by Danuta Laskowska. Miniature Books. The Rodale Press. 5s. each.

Flaubert, as a precocious schoolboy adoring literature with all the fervour of his then flamboyant romanticism, was fascinated by newspaper accounts of the crimes and execution of the Spanish monk and bookseller, Don Vincente, at Barcelona in 1836. On them he based the story published the following year in *Le Colibri*. *Bibliomania* is, of course, immature, melodramatic ; but the passion for words and the choreographic form he gave to his first published work hold one's attention.

A particularly delightful Miniature Book is *I Kiss Your Hand*—the letters that passed between Maupassant and Marie Bashkirtseff in 1884, the year of her death. The bored Maupassant at first barely responded to his unknown correspondent and the small flame of his curiosity and response steadily mounting though it was to the charm, mockery and intelligence of her letters was not enough for her, and already she had turned away, allowing it to gutter out. It was an episode, brief, tenuous yet characteristic, that Chekhov could have made into a perfect short story.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. By J. W. C. Wand. Home Study Books. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

The Bishop of London has written a life of Jesus Christ that presents lucidly the conclusions of the modern scholar. "Where facts are capable of being submitted to common historical judgment we must apply to them the same rigorous rules that we should use in writing secular history"; and throughout he stresses that "the vertical line of eternity" striking "across the horizontal line of time" does not distort a scientific or rational interpretation of the universe but reveals it as "a sacrament conveying the inner life of God to the soul." This small book is an admirable guide to New Testament studies, and a reminder that the Christian is still committed to the life of faith.

BROTHERLY LOVE. By Gabriel Fielding. Hutchinson. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Fielding's first novel is a study of the conflict between two egoists: a mother and her eldest son whom, despite his obvious sensuality, she forces into the priesthood. The three generations of the family are presented as they appear to the youngest son. The Blaydons, grotesque and sex-obsessed, are not entirely credible, and a perfunctory, vaguely mystical Anglo-Catholicism seems almost to foster their uglier sins. Despite the uncertainties of structure and treatment, however, *Brotherly Love* is an unusual book and suggests a writer capable of distinguished work.

UNTO DEATH UTTERLY. Marten Cumberland. Hurst & Blackett. 9s. 6d.

At one time it was fairly simple to consider crime fiction in terms either of the Thriller, where the author aimed at producing a story of action and suspense, or of the Detective Story where there was a definite intellectual riddle for the reader to solve. Nowadays this classification no longer applies; it has been replaced by a distinction between high-brow and low-brow fiction, a division which rests on the author's manner more than his matter, on his public rather than on his plot. Thus exercises in deduction, studies in suspense, and psychological problems can now be legitimately mixed into one story, and it is the author's technique which determines who shall read his book.

Mr. Marten Cumberland undoubtedly belongs to the highbrow school of authors. He specialises in fast-moving stories packed with action, but his French settings, his allusions, and his whole manner are calculated to please the more sophisticated students of the *genre*. In his latest novel, *Unto Death Utterly*, his likeable sleuth, Saturnin Dax, is hunting a gang of brilliant and wealthy degenerates who literally kill for fun. Here is a theme which gives the author opportunity to hold us in suspense and keep us thinking at the same time. Dax must secure evidence to convict the felons, well knowing that they may strike again while he is actually at work, and that even should he produce a cast-iron case, his enemies may be influential enough to escape justice. Herein, perhaps, lies the real drama of the story which is told with insight and intelligence.

F. A. R.

THE WIT OF WINSTON CHURCHILL. By Geoffrey Willans and Charles Roetter. Max Parrish. 8s. 6d.

This small anthology may, as it admits, suffer from the coldness of print ; yet its neat sketches of Sir Winston Churchill's opponents, its reminder that "in the House of Commons, as in any other Club, Members are held in esteem not for the colour of their politics, but for their personalities," and the accompanying cartoons by Vicky, Low, Strube, and others, suggest the occasions that prompted and the attitude and gesture that underlined the shafts of wit which have delighted an always expectant House. Even the discomfited would seem reluctant to be spared any of the virtuoso performances.

ORLA OF BURREN. By Patricia Lynch. Dent. 8s. 6d.

*Orla of Burren* tells of three children who find a magic stone while on holiday at a farmhouse near the river Corrib. When they travel to Galway they find themselves among pirates and Spaniards and visit Granuaile in her island castle. Miss Lynch's formula is always dexterously used ; and this careful blend of fact, fancy and adventure will gratify her many young readers.

A SCREAM AT MIDNIGHT. By T. Arthur Plummer. Stanley Paul. 9s. 6d.  
SOMEONE WALKED OVER MY GRAVE. By J. B. O'Sullivan. Werner Laurie. 9s. 6d.

Neither of these thrillers has much entertainment to offer the reader. In *A Scream at Midnight* Detective-Inspector Frampton and his sergeant are sent to a small holiday resort to investigate the murder of a young man. The involved plot, unattractive characters and dull dialogue will defeat all but the staunchest of Frampton's admirers.

Steve Silk, of whose exploits Mr. O'Sullivan has written several books, arrives in Eire for a holiday but almost at once offers his scarcely-appreciated help to the police when a wealthy old man is murdered in Drumgoole. Against the background of Dublin pubs and middle-class homes, and a political plot, Steve wilts perceptibly, and one can but hope for his safe departure from what—despite the book-jacket—he does not claim to be his ancestral land.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. Vol. V. No. 19. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

In 1953 this *Journal* offered a prize for "the best essay on 'What is the logical and scientific status of the concept of the temporal origin and age of the Universe' (for example, as used in recent cosmological work). The essay should clarify the logical, theoretical, and observational aspects of the idea of assigning a quantitative age to the Universe." The present issue publishes the prize-winning and other outstanding contributions.

PROPOSALS OF WORLD FEDERALISTS FOR UNITED NATIONS CHARTER REVISION.  
By Max Habicht. Transaction No. 19. Re. 1s.

THE RELIGION OF RABINDRANATH. By Maitraye Devi. Transaction No. 20. Re. 1s.

THE VALUE OF THE CLASSICAL TRADITION TO-DAY. By T. W. Melluish and Others. Reprint No. 13. The Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore. 12 Annas.

The proposals of the World Federalists, as set forth by Dr. Max Habicht, deserve to be widely studied as it increasingly appears that such a federal system is the only means to avert a nuclear war and consequent destruction of civilization.

The printed lecture by Shrimati Maitraye Devi may to the Western reader seem over-eulogistic ; but it gives a perceptive account of Rabindranath Tagore's religion and of the school he founded to foster Indian culture. The pamphlet on the value of the classical tradition includes a paper by Mr. T. W. Melluish on the need for those humanistic studies that are to-day neglected for a technical education that serves materialistic ends but little else ; and contributions by Professors G. C. Bannerjee of Bombay University, K. R. S. Iyengar of Andhra University, and K. Anantharamiah and S. Ramachandra Rao of the University of Mysore who, for similar reasons, seek to preserve the classical traditions of India.

TRINITY. An Annual Record published by Trinity College, Dublin. No. 6. Michaelmas, 1954.

The contents of *Trinity* include, in addition to the usual features, papers on the centenary of Carson and Oscar Wilde and Percy French ; appreciations of Professor Henry Dixon and Dr. T. P. C. Kirkpatrick ; and a brief account of the recognition given to women students since their first entry to the University fifty years ago.

#### BOOKS IN IRISH.

Good to see *Almost True*, a collection of short stories by Padraic O'Conaire, reprinted. But why, since his death, do his portrayers make him look like a wet rag ? At his most down-and-out—and I knew him very well—his face had strength and dignity. A noble countenance. Even when he left you for an appointment with the fairies on Howth head—he did not look a simpleton.

There is not a dull page in Leon O'Briain's *Emmet*. (Sairseal and Dill. 8/6.) Fine reproductions of portraits—most interesting of all, an etching from a drawing by Mrs. Byrne of Miles Byrne (1840). One is shocked to see what a charming, kindly face McNally had. Who could have guessed ?

*The Bright Sword*, by Criostoir O Floinn, with admirable illustrations by Mairtin de Fuireastal, should appeal to young readers, boys and girls. (Sairseal and Dill. 6/-.)

Eight delightful *Books for Children* : 4 belonging to the Little Angel series, and 4 (for smaller children) to the Teddy Bear series. The matter varying from fairies and squirrels to cowboys and adventures upon skis—lovely pictures—bright colours—sturdy paper—I never saw such nice books for children. (Sampson, Low. London.) No price is indicated.

BLANAID SALKELD.

MARY MAGDALENE. By Fr. Raymond-Leopold Bruckberger, O.P. Translated by H. L. Binsse. Hutchinson. 12s. 6d.

Fr. Bruckberger, a French priest of the Dominican Order who lives in America, states that he has approached the life history of Mary Magdalene "not as a naturalist, but as a detective . . . In America there are schools for detectives. I therefore procured a manual for detectives in New York." His investigations have led him to believe that she is also the sinful woman in St. Luke's Gospel, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and the friend of Salome.

"As a stork leaves a house which is falling into ruins in order to make a new dwelling upon another roof, John's mission had just shifted to Mary Magdalene. She will continue John's mission and she will extend his prophecy into the New Testament. She will bear witness further than John . . . She knew that Jesus would die. She was like a woman who carries a child within her womb. In the vitals of her love there throbbed already the cruel forboding of her Well-Beloved's death . . . If it is proper to say that before her conversion Mary Magdalene had been Phryne, it is even more accurate to say of her that after her conversion she was Antigone, a Christian Antigone, more true, even more touching and more tragic than the most pathetic of Greek heroines . . . Christ and the Magdalene both moved forward at the same pace towards Calvary . . ."

We are shown her from the time when "already sure of her splendid body, she tossed on her bed, clenched her fists, and said in her heart, 'I also shall be a Queen Cleopatra or Phryne the courtesan' to the days when the angels carried her seven times daily to the mountain to pray, and her soul fled to Paradise.

THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN IRELAND: 1784-1841. By Brian Inglis. Faber and Faber. 25s.

Dr. Inglis quotes for epilogue to his book from John Philpot Curran's speech at the trial of Hamilton Rowan : "Where the press is free, and discussion unrestrained, the mind, by the collision of intercourse, gets rid of its own asperities; a sort of insensible perspiration takes place in the body politic, by which these acrimonies, which would otherwise fester and inflame, are quietly dissolved and dissipated . . . What then remains? The liberty of the press *only*—that sacred palladium which no influence, no power, no minister, no government, which nothing but the depravity, or folly, or corruption of a jury, can ever destroy."

The rhetoric was expected, but the recognition of the press as a forceful democratic influence was still novel in 1794. The government's attitude was bland or patronising when newspapers showed a proper respect; but any criticism was silenced, if bribery failed, by intimidation, by packed juries, by any legal trickery. The commercial sheets of the years before 1780, their news "almost an afterthought", were now, however, sufficiently transformed despite their vicissitudes for the conception of a free press to take uncertain shape. Dr. Inglis is, therefore, less concerned with the quality or range or even the

nationalism of the newspapers of the period than with "the press in its capacity as a potential fourth estate", and with the restrictions which hindered that development; and he examines in fascinating, and often lively, detail its relations with the state. His book is a valuable addition to the Faber series of "Studies in Irish History."

**SET ALL AFIRE.** By Louis de Wohl. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

**FOOL'S HAVEN.** By C. C. Cawley. House of Edinboro, Boston. \$2.75.

In *Set All Afire*, which tells the story of St. Francis Xavier's life, Mr. Louis de Wohl repeats the formula used in his books on St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine: the vivid background, the crowd of minor characters, edification and humour, fact and fiction—everything that can groom a saint for a popular rôle. The portrait of St. Francis is, however, a little grotesque, with his dashes here and there to baptize equally hasty converts, as if baptism were a magic rite. His ignorance on the subject of Buddhism is not, of course, surprising; but the author's presentation of it and of Protestantism will seem puerile, his silence about the real reason for the attempt to set up the Inquisition in Goa uncandid, to the informed reader.

*Fool's Haven* is an attack on certain religious sects in America. Several court cases have prompted Mr. Cawley's question: "With proven medical aid available to all, and with the continuing tragic record of faith-healing failures, is not faith-healing truly a fool's haven from reality? Has not the time come for society to re-assess its existing legal boundary between religious freedom and fanatical religious irresponsibility?" He puts his case fairly, but his novel is no more than a minor piece of journalism.

**THE CHILDREN OF GREEN KNOWE.** By L. M. Boston. Illustrated by Peter Boston. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

When the small and lonely Tolly goes to visit his great-grandmother, winter floods gave him the pleasant experience of arriving by boat at the door of her house, high and narrow like a tower, and ancient. The old lady, the servant Boggs and Tolly are not alone for the three children who lived there in the seventeenth century, and about whom the great-grandmother tells enchanting stories, seem still to play with their animals in the garden and even at times to share the little boy's quaint bedroom.

The publishers very justly suggest that *The Children of Green Knowe* with its unusual illustrations should go on the shelf beside *The Wind in the Willows*. Mrs. Boston's book may owe more than a little to both Kenneth Grahame and Walter de la Mare, but it is an outstanding addition to children's literature.

**ONLY FADE AWAY.** By Bruce Marshall. Constable. 12s. 6d.

The central character of *Only Fade Away* is a rather weak and conventional man whose self-conscious decency and stilted expression of his beliefs meet with mild amusement or dislike. Circumstances and people thwart his efforts to find a modest happiness: his indifferent wife; the son whose ideas bewilder him; the

bully whom he had nervously defied in his school-days and who, with almost incredible malice, contrives that in both world wars Methuen face grave and unfounded charges of cowardice; his hectoring superior officers.

The war scenes, the home background and the comedy are well-done, and the tenacity with which Methuen clings to his embarrassing and vague Many-Splendoured Thing sensitively depicted. It is a tribute to Mr. Marshall's technique that the banality of many of the characters does not lessen one's interest in the novel.

DON'T HANG ME TOO HIGH. By J. B. O'Sullivan. Werner Laurie. 9s. 6d.

THE DOLL'S DONE DANCING. By Briain Flynn. John Long. 9s. 6d.

Steve Silk, the private detective in Mr. O'Sullivan's stories, is susceptible to glamorous women, careless about fees, has a bright turn of speech and a remarkable thirst. Naturally, the police always view him with distaste, and here it requires all his wit and muscle to escape arrest when Blake Newman, the rich man who has employed him, is found murdered. Newman's wife, his sons and daughters are also suspects, and much happens before Steve solves the mystery. The reader who likes thrillers of this sort will enjoy *Don't Hang Me Too High* for its speed and deftness.

In *The Doll's Done Dancing* a very unpleasant dramatic critic is murdered, and the baffled Chief Detective-Inspector MacMorran of Scotland Yard asks his friend, the semi-official Anthony Bathurst, for assistance. After investigating the dead man's murky past and the alibis of his acquaintances, Bathurst offers an explanation of the affair which is ingenious but so conjectural that the inspector's credulity is surprising. Mr. Flynn, however, mixes his ingredients—stodgy police, the intellectual investigator, actors, high life and low,—with a practised hand.

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